

**MYTHOLOGICAL
NARRATIVE ART
IN
ROMAN NUMISMATICS**

by

Michael R. Jenkins

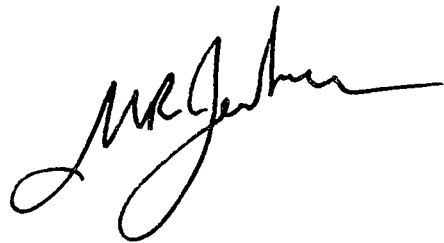
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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other higher degree or graduate diploma in any tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MR. J. H. ...', written in a cursive style.

ABSTRACT

This thesis recognizes the monoscenic mode of narrative art (whereby an event is depicted without transgressing temporal and spatial unity) as a legitimate method of narrative depiction and argues that the inseparable link between the internal artistic features of a work and its illustrative relationship to a known story (an external reference) is that which ultimately determines narrative art. Being the first major study of Roman numismatic mythological types from a narrative perspective, this thesis identifies, describes, classifies and (based on the criterion of the perceived degree to which the viewer of a type is engaged by the work and encouraged to respond emotionally to it), makes assessments in regard to artistic qualities of examples of mythological narrative coin-, medallion- and contorniate-types struck or cast at Rome in the period from the Republic until c.A.D. 470. In the history of numismatic production from Rome it is found that, with two exceptions (one 'simultaneous' and one 'proto-cyclic'), no such types deviate from the monoscenic mode of narrative expression, and that while a 'cyclic mentality' is apparent in the planning of some minted 'series' (whereby phases of an episode were depicted individually on separate flans), no examples of continuous narrative can be identified. While individually examples of numismatic mythological narrative art are evidence for die-engravers' technical and artistic skill (either in creating original designs or in adapting designs from prototypes), and suggest political motivations or personal interests in the selection of types by the minting officials or the emperors, collectively such types reveal a hereto unnoted historical artistic

process. Whereas mythological narrative depiction on the Republican coinage was independently developed by moneyers in order to throw glory on their respective gentes, under the imperial system such political messages were no longer considered appropriate and were dispensed with. Thus innovative mythological narrative designs disappeared during the pre-Hadrianic period. The regular striking of bronze medallions under Hadrian heralded the introduction of a mature and fully developed tradition of numismatic mythological narrative art which, in numeric and artistic terms, reached its zenith under Antoninus Pius. During the former's reign the issuing of the so-called 'programme series' gave emphasis to Italic myths, while Greek traditions were further celebrated. From the reign of Marcus Aurelius to Constantius II (when such types disappear from the officially struck coins and medallions), the appearance of mythological narrative types is spasmodic and characteristically retrospective in nature (providing evidence for the existence of a 'reference collection' of earlier dies or 'proofs'). The production of contorniates ('unofficially' produced medallion-like objects of the late empire) witnessed a significant revival in mythological narrative types, providing evidence for a corrupting copying process and giving some insight into the artistic processes occurring in the contorniate-workshops.

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5 - The Niketeria

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>AJA</u>	American Journal of Archaeology
<u>AJN</u>	American Journal of Numismatics
<u>BMCRE</u>	Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum
<u>BMCR</u>	Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum
<u>BMQ</u>	British Museum Quarterly
<u>CCJ</u>	The Coin Collectors Journal
<u>CRR</u>	The Coinage of the Roman Republic
<u>HCC</u>	Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet, University of Glasgow
<u>JEA</u>	The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
<u>JHS</u>	Journal of Hellenic Studies
<u>JIAN</u>	Journal International d'Archeologie Numismatique
<u>JRS</u>	Journal of Roman Studies
<u>LIMC</u>	Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae
<u>MAAR</u>	Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome
<u>NC</u>	Numismatic Chronicle
<u>NCirc</u>	Numismatic Circular
<u>NZ</u>	Numismatische Zeitschrift
<u>PBA</u>	Proceedings of the British Academy
<u>RIC</u>	The Roman Imperial Coinage
<u>RIN</u>	Rivista italiana di numismatica
<u>SAN</u>	Journal of the Society of Ancient Numismatics
<u>ZfN</u>	Zeitschrift für Numismatik

INTRODUCTION

The question of narrative has dominated discussions of Roman art since 1895 when F.Wickhoff published an essay on the development of Roman art in Die Wiener Genesis.¹ Discussions of the narrative qualities of Roman art since Wickhoff's day have tended to centre upon the depictions of historical events on monumental reliefs and the question of 'continuous narration' in an effort to define an individual, 'Roman' quality in Roman art.² This focus of attention has meant that other modes of narrative expression and their translation into artistic media other than monumental relief and wall painting have been largely overlooked. It is an aim of this thesis to identify examples of mythological narrative art from the coins, medallions and contorniates struck or cast at Rome from Republican times to c.A.D. 470, and to examine their narrative qualities.

Because of their very limited size, circular shape and low relief, the flans of coins and medallions are generally unsuited to the depiction of intricate scenes involving large numbers of figures engaged in complex actions; nor are they well suited for the depiction of various phases of an action or story. The die-engraver, faced with the limitations of his medium, characteristically chose to concentrate attention on a single,

¹ Wickhoff's essay in Die Wiener Genesis 1895, was translated and edited by Strong.A 1900, under the title Roman Art. References to Strong's translation of Wickhoff's work will, in this thesis, be noted as 'Wickhoff 1900'.

² For example see Gardner 1917, pp.11 - 19f., Bandinelli in Breglia 1968, p.13f., Brendel 1953, and Toynbee 1953.

significant action when depicting mythological scenes. While it was common to include only those figures directly involved in the action shown, some designs require subsidiary figures either to explain the scene or to give it added significance by the inclusion of allegorical figures to highlight the universal importance of the action depicted. This mode of narrative expression, based on the depiction of a single, significant event or action within the border of a single frame, has been termed 'monoscenic'.³

In the history of Roman Imperial numismatic production it will be found that only two mythological narrative types issued from Rome deviated from the use of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction. However monoscenic depictions have been rejected by some writers as not constituting 'true narrative'. Brilliant, for example, argues that "... all narratives require some form of sequential reference. Such reference may occur within the boundaries of a single frame or in extension through the accumulation of units, related by proximity and organised so as to suggest association and compatibility."⁴ Meyboom expresses a similar view, stating: "We cannot consider a representation which consists of one scene as really narrative, firstly because in that way every scene is narrative and secondly because such a scene is narrative only for a spectator who recognizes the scene represented and, knowing the story to which the scene belongs, is able to associate it with its previous history and its outcome. A

³ Weitzmann 1970, p.14f., and Snodgrass 1982, p.5.

⁴ Brilliant 1984, p.29.

representation, in fact, only becomes narrative when more scenes from the same story are depicted, so that the spectator who does not know the story to which the represented scene belongs, may be able to understand at least part of it."⁵ These views are based on the assumption that narrative depictions must be able to relate various phases of an action or episode, and that the depicted actions are sufficient in themselves to explain the events and 'tell the story'.

The views of Brilliant and Meyboom are based upon the premiss that it is the internal features of an artistic work which ultimately determine whether it may be considered narrative or not. By contrast the definition of narrative argued in this thesis is based upon the premiss that narrative art, in its most important aspect, differs from other forms of artistic expression because it is illustrative of an event which is spatially and temporally distinct and involves recognizable individuals engaged in specific action. Thus narrative art involves an inseparable link between the internal artistic features of the depiction and external references. The artist relies on the viewer's knowledge of the specific story which his depiction illustrates. This knowledge of references external to the specific visual information conveyed by the individual artistic work itself allows the viewer to understand the wider significance and meaning of the work. These internal and external features are linked through the incorporation of visual clues within the work, such as the depiction of specific

⁵ Meyboom 1978, p.57.

situations or attributes, or the use of labelling, naming, and in the case of some numismatic pieces, explanatory legends.

In recognizing the monoscenic mode as a legitimate method of narrative depiction, this thesis is adopting a point of view shared by several writers on the nature of narrative art. The mode was recognised in the publication of Robert's Bild und Lied of 1881, where he called it 'Situationsbilder'.⁶ Wickhoff describes the method as 'distinguirend'.⁷ More recently the term 'monoscenic' has been applied to this narrative mode by Weitzmann, who describes it as concentrating on a single action within the limits of one scene, based on the principles of the unity of time and place.⁸ Snodgrass has also described the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction in his Narration and Allusion in Archaic Greek Art.⁹

Meyboom criticizes the monoscenic mode for being dependent on 'a spectator ... knowing the story to which [the] scene belongs'. He also states, "Later on this method [monoscenic] will also be widely used as a method for book illustration but then the representation becomes narrative only through the text which it illustrates."¹⁰ The underlying assumption on which these views

⁶ Meyboom 1978, p.70, noting Robert Bild und Lied 1881, p.29. Also see Weitzmann 1970, p.35.

⁷ Wickhoff 1900, p.13. Meyboom 1978, p.70, noting Wickhoff's essay in Die Wiener Genesis 1895, p.9.

⁸ Weitzmann 1970, pp.14 - 17, 34 - 35.

⁹ Snodgrass 1982, p.5.

¹⁰ Meyboom 1978, p.70.

are based is that a monoscenic depiction only becomes narrative when a viewer is aware of the wider story or event, of which the scene illustrates a particular moment. It could be argued that artists such as the Imperial medallion-engravers assumed that the viewers of their works would have the necessary background information or external references to enable them to interpret a narrative design.¹¹ Whether the specific event or individuals celebrated on their flans can be identified by all beholders today or not, in drawing inspiration from the wealth of Greek and Roman oral and literary traditions recalling mythological events the artist who chose to use the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction assumed that admirers of his work would bring with them to the piece the necessary external references to interpret its narration. It might thus be argued that, **'Narrative is in the eye and mind of the beholder!'**

Given that so much of the oral and literary tradition of the ancient world has been lost to us, it is of course likely that some scenes will no longer be recognized as illustrations of specific events. Some numismatic depictions, for example, show recognizable individuals engaged in actions which may be non-specific and typical in nature, or may in fact be specific events described by lost oral or literary sources. As such they may be classified as 'quasi-narrative'.

¹¹ See, for example, Toynbee 1944, p.112.

The dependence of narrative depictions on a textual source is stressed by Weitzmann in his works Ancient Book Illumination¹² and Illustrations in Roll and Codex.¹³ It should be noted, however, that while the definition of narrative adopted in this thesis is based upon an inseparable link between the internal artistic features of the work and its reliance on the viewer's prior knowledge of the story or event depicted, dependence on a textual source is not assumed to be the only form of external reference relied on by the narrative artist. While it will be argued that some numismatic depictions, such as the 'Aeneid' medallion-type,¹⁴ appear to be illustrative of such a uniform textual source, the narrative artist could also have drawn inspiration from a number of sources such as oral folklore and legends, or combined aspects or interpretations of events recorded by various literary authors.

If one accepts the definition of narrative argued in this thesis, Meyboom's view that one scene cannot constitute narrative 'because in that way every scene is narrative' may be dismissed. Similarly one may reject Snodgrass' view that "There is a sense of the word 'narrative' which covers every scene in which even one distinctive action is shown, whether that action is taken from a recognized legend or from the ordinary experience of

¹² Weitzmann 1959.

¹³ Weitzmann 1970.

¹⁴ See Chapters Three.B, pp.50 - 66 and Four.B.i, pp.108 - 110, Appendix Two, The 'Aeneid' Medallion, A Narrative Interpretation, and **Plates 6.1 , 10.1.**

contemporary life."¹⁵ Scenes of individuals engaged in typical actions, for example Hercules being crowned by Victory,¹⁶ lack temporal references and appear as symbolic representations 'outside' time. Such scenes are not narrative for they are not related to an action which has a temporal and spatial setting, and are thus not illustrative of a specific event.

It is argued here that the inseparable link between the internal and external features of an artistic work ultimately determines that which may be considered to constitute narrative art; narrative art is illustrative of a specific, recognizable action or event. However, such a definition requires some qualification. Within the context of ancient Roman art a distinction may be made between what may be considered 'good' and 'bad' narrative art based on the quality of the action depicted. Consider, for example, a Proto-Attic stand depicting a row of finely dressed men.¹⁷ While the chance survival of the painted name of 'Menelas', a label which links the scene to external references, allows one to identify the scene as the assembling of the Greek princes prior to the voyage to Troy,¹⁸ the scene appears static and patterned. Good narrative art is more than labelling, more

¹⁵ Snodgrass 1982, p.15.

¹⁶ For examples of Imperial medallions carrying this type, see Chapters Four.A, p.95, Note 69, Five.A, pp.176 - 177, and Five.B, p.179, and Plates 12.7 and 13.1.

¹⁷ Boardman, Dörig, Fuchs and Hirmer 1967, Figure 111.

¹⁸ For reference to Menelaos' mustering of the Greek princes see, for example, Apollodorus *The Library* - *Epitome* III.6.

than simply a dependence on an external reference such as the story of a legendary event. Narrative art, good narrative art, must also rely on the internal artistic features of the work, particularly the depiction of physical or psychological action and re-action; "... narrative art involves a quality of action. It need not be violent action, but it must be action which in the first instance engages us as spectators in the event with a direct, immediate interest for its own sake."¹⁹ It follows that the artistic qualities of details such as pose, anatomical features and drapery, and the employment of illusionistic devices to give the scenes a sense of depth and spatial setting are of prime importance, because it is from such details that the actors and their actions are composed, and the visual clues which link the depiction to its external references are established and embellished. It is also through such details that the viewer is engaged by the work and encouraged to respond to it. While a detailed discussion of the general development of ancient art is outside the scope of this thesis, it may be argued that ancient art is characterized by a transition from the schematic to the naturalistic mode of representation, inspired by the desire to produce a more visually credible image. It follows from this that the ancient viewer of a piece would have found a depiction executed in a schematic manner less visually convincing and satisfying, from a narrative point of view, than a naturalistic representation.

¹⁹ Hood.R 'The Question of Greek Narrative Art...', (Unpublished), p.6.

In his rejection of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction Meyboom states the opinion that the narrative power of the figures is more a matter of expression dependent on a viewer's subjective response than pure narrative.²⁰ If one assumes that the monoscenic mode is a legitimate form of narrative art, the expressive qualities of the work may be used to judge in part the artistic quality of the depiction. If a narrative work lacks visual or psychological credibility it will fail to attract an emotional response from the viewer and may be judged 'bad narrative' because of this. The degree of emotional response invoked by the work will, of course, depend not only on its artistic qualities, but also the subjective attitudes and values which the viewer brings to the work. In this regard narrative art is no different to all other forms of artistic expression.

The narrative qualities of Roman Imperial numismatic representations have been largely overlooked by art historians. Hamberg's Studies in Roman Imperial Art²¹ is one of the few significant works to use the term 'narrative' in respect to the coinage. In the opening chapter of his work, 'The Significance of a Distinction Between Different Modes of Representation Illustrated by some Imperial Coin-Types', Hamberg uses the term narrative to describe the depiction of historical events 'from real life'. Indeed he uses the word narrative almost as an antonym for 'allegorical': "A number of modes of representation are extant

²⁰ Meyboom 1978, p.57 and p.74.

²¹ Hamberg 1945.

from the purely realistic, narrative ceremony type, founded on fact, to the pure, isolated personification".²² While a discussion of mythological depictions on Imperial numismatic pieces lies outside the scope of Hamberg's work, such a definition of narrative would appear to exclude them. Similarly Bandinelli's discussion of narrative in Roman Imperial Coins - Their Art & Technique in the chapter entitled 'Historical reality: narrative relief' discusses briefly and exclusively the numismatic depiction of historical events.²³ Such a narrow and restrictive use of the term narrative, divorced as it is in Studies in Roman Imperial Art from reference to artistic characteristics, highlights the fact that discussions have, in the past, failed to treat adequately the question of mythological narrative art in Roman numismatic production. It is the aim of this thesis to redress this situation by an examination of the major examples of mythological numismatic narrative art from the city of Rome; by identifying narrative scenes and the external references which they illustrate, examining their internal artistic features and narrative qualities, and where appropriate speculating on possible artistic prototypes from which die-engravers may have drawn their inspiration. Non-narrative mythological types will also be discussed where their artistic features or subject matter give insight to the

²² Hamberg 1945, p.33.

²³ Bandinelli in Breglia 1968, pp.13f. Levi 1952, pp.5, 19, 24, and 43 also uses the term 'narrative' in regard to coin-types which depict historical scenes, such as Trajanic sestertii bearing the legend **REX PARTHIS DATUS** and depicting the investiture of King Parthamaspates.

development of the narrative quality of Roman numismatic production.

The term numismatic has, in this thesis, been used in its widest sense to include standard and special issues of coinage, the commemorative medallions, and pieces sharing qualities of both coins and medallions variously called 'medallic-coins', 'sub-medallions', 'pre-medallions', and 'pseudo-medallions'.²⁴ To this list of numismatic pieces issued by the Imperial Mint must be added the contorniates, a class of numismatic pieces created during the period of the Late Empire.

Rome's mint, the unrivalled minting authority of the Western Empire, had an almost unbroken record in the production of gold, silver and bronze numismatic pieces against which artistic developments and innovations can be measured and judged. The majority of the medallions and sub-medallions struck during the Imperial period were issued by the Mint of Rome.²⁵ It cannot be denied that Rome had a 'magnetic quality', attracting masters of the die-engraver's art along with other leading artists from throughout the Empire eager to find employment with

²⁴ Grant 1953, Toynbee 1944, pp.17 - 41, and Melville Jones 1990, pp.176 - 177. The terms 'money-medallions' and 'multiples' have also been applied to such pieces.

²⁵ Toynbee 1944, p.48, notes that "With the reign of Gallienus we reach a turning-point in the mint history of Roman medallions, which were issued henceforth not only in Rome but at the new Imperial mints now officially established in Italy and in the provinces." Discussion in this thesis of Gallienic and post-Gallienic medallion-types is generally restricted to those created at Rome (see Chapter Six).

Imperial and private patrons.²⁶ During the period in question Rome remained the primary source of Imperial numismatic artistic endeavour, and it was from the city of Rome that the final expression of mythological narrative art in Roman numismatic production, the contorniates, was created.²⁷

In focusing attention on a particular mode of numismatic artistic expression from the city of Rome - mythological narrative art - and surveying the entire history of its employment from the period of the Republic to the late fifth century, the chronological development of artistic innovations, conventions and interests may be clearly observed, and patterns of copying and re-issuing become apparent. The picture of artistic endeavour which emerges from an examination based on a broad overview of numismatic production allows the observations of past writers concerning processes such as the formation of artistic schools of die-engravers to be refined and placed within an historical perspective. For example Toynbee's arguments for the introduction to Rome of a Greek school of die-engravers during the reign of Hadrian²⁸ and the existence of an archive within the Mint of Rome in which some design 'proofs' or dies survived from the second to the fourth century²⁹ are supported by the

²⁶ For example see Toynbee 1944(b), pp.71 - 72.

²⁷ Alföldi 1943, p.23. Toynbee 1945, p.116, notes "It can hardly be doubted that all contorniates, with the possible exception of the small group bearing portraits of Theodosius I and Arcadius [not examined in this thesis], were struck or cast in Rome."

²⁸ Toynbee 1967, pp.24 - 159.

²⁹ Toynbee 1944(b), pp.72 - 73.

evidence of mythological narrative types. However the introduction of a fully developed Greek artistic tradition during the Hadrianic period had been preceded by the hitherto unnoted independent creation of a Roman mythological narrative tradition by Republican die-makers which was superseded under the new political order established by Augustus. Hadrian's die-school was to have a most significant impact on the mythological narrative types created during the reign of his successor, Antoninus Pius, under whom this mode of numismatic art was to reach its zenith. After his rule mythological narrative types all but disappear and, with the exception of some few designs, when they do emerge they are characteristically copies of Antonine types. Similarly several contorniate-types are based on Antonine designs. Furthermore an examination of the contorniates from a narrative perspective suggests the existence of a protracted and corrupting process of design copying and re-copying, giving new insight into the artistic processes which occurred in the contorniate workshops.

When viewed from the wider historical perspective the spasmodic nature of the issuing of coins and medallions bearing mythological narrative scenes during the Imperial period becomes apparent. This fact strongly suggests that such types were struck at the direction of individual emperors, reflecting their personal interests in legendary events and figures of the past. While some such types served a political purpose by making an implied comparison between events and personalities of the past and present, many of the Imperial numismatic mythological types would appear motivated by antiquarian delight and an interest in

celebrating legendary events and individuals. Thus a study of mythological narrative scenes on Roman coins and medallions gives us some insight into the personalities and private interests of the emperors - an insight not often afforded by surviving textual sources and works in other artistic media.

The term 'mythological' has, in this thesis, been used in its widest sense to include depictions of the legendary action of the heroes or gods based on specific, identifiable scenes illustrating known external references. While some legendary events may be regarded as 'fictional', others may be based on historical events. It is outside the scope of this discussion to examine the historical accuracy of recorded legendary events:

Quae ante conditam condendamve urbem poeticis
magis decora fabulis quam incorruptis rerum ges-
tarum monumentis traduntur, ea nec adfirmare nec
refellere in animo est. Datur haec venia antiquitati,
ut miscendo humana divinis primordia urbium augus-
tiora faciat.

Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Praefatio 6 - 7.

CHAPTER ONE

THE REPUBLIC

In any discussion of the production of numismatic pieces in the Republican period one is faced with the problem of attempting to identify the specific mint of production and absolute date of any given coin-type. Melville Jones notes, "... the date when the regular minting of coins began at Rome is a matter of doubt. The earliest Roman silver coins follow Greek models ... and were certainly struck for distribution in Italy south of Rome Some of the earliest Roman bronze coins, however, may have been produced at Rome itself. ... Until the end of the Second Punic War there are often reasons for suggesting that Roman coins were still produced in a number of different places outside Rome, in Italy and Sicily or even in Spain. But after this, Rome became the normal mint for both silver and bronze coins until the end of the Republic, although there are many exceptions to this general rule."¹ The survey of Republican mythological types which follows will not, therefore, be strictly confined to the Mint of Rome but will examine provincial types with narrative and artistic features which parallel those produced at the capital.²

Numismatic mythological types depicting heroic characters and events from the lives of heroes and gods date back to the very earliest periods of Rome's minting history. Republican moneyers, like their Imperial successors, placed some emphasis on showing

¹ Melville Jones 1990, pp.195 - 196.

² See also CRR, p.xliv, and Crawford 1974, pp.8f. and pp.600f.

figures and events which were directly related to the legendary past of the city such as its founding by Romulus, and the actions of heroes like Hercules and the Dioscuri who came to its aid.

The earliest mythological types showing legendary figures include depictions of the Dioscuri, holding spears and mounted on charging horses (**Plate 1.1**),³ and the twins being suckled by the she-wolf (**Plate 1.2**).⁴ The figures depicted on these coin-types are recognizable characters drawn from well known legendary events, but here they are used as 'symbols of patriotism',⁵ as representations of the glory of the city of Rome. The Republican die-engravers who designed these coin-types used these figures in a purely symbolic manner; they were not interested in relating, in a visually convincing manner, the actions or events in which the characters were the major protagonists. The Dioscuri type was repeated for over fifty years at a number of mints throughout Italy, with little or no alteration to the basic design. Such a protracted and widespread employment of a design would seem to suggest that the Republican minting authorities were content to simply copy and re-copy a mythological coin-type which adequately expressed the message of Rome's military might, ordained and actively aided by the gods.

3 CRR, Numbers 140 - 222. Also Crawford 1974, Plates IX, X, XIII, XIV, XVI, XVII, XIX-XXVII, XXXIII-XXXV, and BMCRR I, Plates XIII-XXVI, VIII, LXXVIII-LXXXVIII. LIMC III, Castores p.622, n.108.

4 CRR, Number 95. Also see Crawford 1974, Plates I.8 and XII.7, and Melville Jones 1990, p.327 - 328.

5 O'Neal 1977, p.89.

While the figures shown on these two coin-types are recognizable individuals, they are without spatial dimension and strict temporal setting. In effect the actions of the twins suckling and the Dioscuri charging are 'outside' time, they are symbols rather than 'illustrations' of actions restricted to a specific temporal dimension. The charging attitude of the horses of the Dioscuri does create some sense of motion, but the action of the charge is not tied to a precise temporal setting and the action is not specific. On the other hand the 'She-wolf and Twins' type does show the nursing of Romulus and Remus by the she-wolf, a recognizable legendary event involving known individuals.⁶ While it may be argued that these features of the design suggest that it could be considered to constitute an example of narrative art, its lack of spatial setting and visually stimulating action suggest that it would be a 'poor' example if so judged. Indeed the overriding symbolic nature of the type argues that it should not be considered narrative at all. The die-engraver was clearly not concerned with illustrating a legendary event, with 'telling the story' - the type is a purely symbolic statement 'outside' time and space, not a narrative design.

The ability of die-engravers of the Republican period to depict visually credible scenes of violent action is apparent from several coin-types. A series of coins struck at Rome at some time between

⁶ For example see Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book I. iv.6.

217 and 215 B.C.,⁷ show Hercules engaged in mortal combat with a centaur (**Plate 1.3**).⁸ The action they are engaged in attracts the viewer's immediate attention for it is convincingly executed and the figures appear organic, especially when compared with those of other types designed by the engravers at Rome. Hercules grasps the creature's head in his left hand, while preparing to strike with the club held in his right. The torso of the centaur is depicted arched back against the hero's grip and its left arm is bent behind its head as the beast struggles to charge away. The bodies of both combatants, although sadly worn, appear robust and muscular. As an example of the monoscenic mode of narrative art, the scene is a common motif dating from the earliest days of Greek black-figure vase-painting.⁹ The design of this triens-type is very similar to coin-types from Larinum, suggesting a relationship between them.¹⁰

The scene depicted on this triens-type shares narrative characteristics with a coin minted in Sicily (?) between 211 and 209 B.C. The reverse displays a scene of Hercules engaged in combat with the stag, with his bow shown behind him and the legend **ROMA**

⁷ BMCRR II, pp.135 - 136, suggests that these pieces were struck at Capua, but outlines the difficulties associated with identifying the place of manufacture. Crawford 1974, pp.43 & 150, suggests they were produced at Rome. CRR, p.9, dates these coins to 222 - 187 B.C., Crawford 1974, pp.150, to 217 - 215 B.C. See also Melville Jones 1990, p.135 and p.272.

⁸ Crawford 1974, Plate VII.5 Number 39/1.

⁹ Boardman 1974, Plate 5. For references to Hercules' battles with centaurs see, for example, Apollodorus, The Library II.vii.7.

¹⁰ BMCRR II, p.135, notes this similarity.

below (**Plate 1.4**).¹¹ The die-engraver's ability to depict organic and visually convincing human figures engaged in violent action is evident in this powerful monoscenic design. The hero's robust and well muscled right leg balances his body while his left leg is bent at the knee and his weight is borne down upon the back of the Cerynaian stag. The animal faces to the right and its legs are shown to be giving way under the hero's weight. Its neck is arched backwards as Hercules grasps its antlers. The poses displayed on this coin-type are most similar to a number of sculptural depictions of this labour ranging from an archaic metope of the Athenian Treasury at Delphi¹² to a classical metope from the Hephaisteion,¹³ and a small bronze of Hercules and the stag, probably based on a larger statuary group (**Figure XXVIII**).¹⁴ From whatever source the die-engraver of the triens drew his inspiration, he can be credited with achieving a powerful and visually convincing scene which engages the viewer's attention.

While the narrative qualities and artistic merits of the two Hercules types discussed above reflect the artistic talents of some die-makers active during the third century B.C., this tradition was

¹¹ Crawford 1974, p.175 & Plate XV Number 16. Also see CRR, Plate 14.93. For references to Hercules' struggle with the Cerynaian stag see, for example, Apollodorus, The Library II.v.3.

¹² Robertson 1975, Plate 51.a.

¹³ Morgan 1962, Plate 71.c.

¹⁴ Bieber 1955, Figure 78.

generally not followed by engravers at Rome. Even though the 'Hercules and Nessus' type was struck at that city, both types appear to belong to a Greek tradition of die-engraving, known in Samnium and Sicily, but largely foreign to Rome itself.¹⁵ No other mythological coin-types of the Republican period reflect the degree of interest in physical action and naturalism of design evident on these types. Narrative art on Roman coinage appears to owe its origins to the desire of moneyers to reflect glory on their own gentes by association with mythological and legendary figures of Rome's past.¹⁶

The moneyer Gaius Renius was the first to exploit the potential of the coinage for the glorification of his gens and he set a precedent that was to be followed by many Republican moneyers.¹⁷ It has been noted by O'Neal that "The coinage of the Republic reflects the individual's awareness of past and of present - of his mythological history, the deeds of his ancestors, and the present political situation. The moneyers of Rome ... took every opportunity to propagandize, to record the deeds of their ancestors, to convey their own political beliefs. These things were done for the glorification of their own gens, for the enhancement of their own reputations, and for political

¹⁵ Crawford 1974, p.150, and Melville Jones 1990, p.195.

¹⁶ For discussion of the nature of the political messages of Roman coinage, and the debate concerning their 'propagandist' nature, see, for example, West 1949, Grant 1952, Sutherland 1957, Luce 1968, O'Neal 1977, Swingler 1978, Levick 1982, Grierson 1983, and Wallace-Hadrill 1986, pp.647f.

¹⁷ O'Neal 1977, p.90. Also see Toynbee 1953, p.79.

gain."¹⁸ A possible example of this personal use of the coinage to highlight the glory of a moneyer's gens is a series of denarii struck between 137 and 125 B.C. at Rome by Sex.Pompeius (**Plate 1.5**).¹⁹ It has been argued by O'Neal that in issuing this coin-type Sex.Pompeius' aim may have been to link himself with descent from Faustulus.²⁰ An ancestor who played such an important part in the founding of Rome would obviously reflect great glory on his gens. Other writers, however, have suggested that the legend **FOSTLVS** was intended to identify the shepherd, and that the scene may have been used to symbolise a belief in Rome's imperial claims.^{20.a} While the coin-type may have had a specific political purpose, it displays some important artistic features. From the narrative point of view this coin-type is significantly different from those which simply depict the twins and she-wolf. The reverse type shows the twins, Romulus and Remus, being suckled by the she-wolf, with a tree behind holding, in its branches, a woodpecker, a bird sacred to Mars. To the left of the central scene the royal shepherd of Amulius, Faustulus, is depicted in the act of discovering the twins at the foot of the Palatine. His right hand is shown raised in an attitude of surprise and his left leg is bent at the knee, suggesting he has halted in mid-

¹⁸ O'Neal 1977, p.89.

¹⁹ CCR, Number 462, and Crawford 1974, p.267, n.235.1a - c. LIMC IV Faustulus p.131, n.7.

²⁰ O'Neal 1977, p.90.

^{20.a} Melville Jones 1990, p.113, suggests "The legend **FOSTLVS** ... is probably intended to identify the shepherd rather than to show that the moneyer's *cognomen* was Faustulus or Fostulus." See also Crawford 1974, p.268.

stride. The die-engraver has here shown a precise moment in the legend, the actual moment of discovery, as opposed to the eternal symbol of the 'She-wolf and Twins' which is without strict temporal reference and appears 'outside' time. Also there is an apparent interest on the part of the die-engraver in giving the action a spatial setting in the form of the background tree, undoubtedly the fig under which the twins' basket overturned during its passage down the Tiber. This scene may be considered to constitute an example of the monoscenic method of narrative depiction. The figures themselves are schematically represented. The she-wolf's hips, for example, are represented by simple engraved circles. While the artistic quality of the design is not very great and narrative concerns were clearly overshadowed by the political aim of the moneyer, this coin-type heralds the narrative potential of Roman numismatic objects at an early date.^{20.b}

The moneyer Marcus Herennius issued denarii at Rome between 108 and 107 B.C. depicting, on their reverses, one of the Catanaean brothers running towards the right, bearing his father on his shoulders (Plate 1.6).²¹ The scene alludes to the legendary heroic actions of the brothers Amphinomus and Anapias who rescued their aged parents during the eruption of Mount Aetna.²² It has been

^{20.b} As argued in the Introduction, pp.vii f., within the frame-work of ancient art schematic representations generally fail to satisfy the criteria of 'good' narrative.

²¹ Crawford 1974, Plate XLI.9, Number 308/1b. LIMC I, Amphinomos et Anapias p.717, n.3.

²² Aetna 603 - 646, in Minor Latin Poets.

suggested that the choice for this type may have been inspired by Marcus' Sicilian origins.²³ While the action of the Catanaean brother bearing his father is recognizable and drawn from a specific legendary event, the type is of limited narrative interest. The design is totally lacking in spatial reference, and the figures are schematically represented. The poses of the figures attract some attention from the viewer as the son strides forth, supporting with both arms his father who is seated on his shoulders. The old man's head is turned to the left as he looks back to the devastation he has escaped. The viewer cannot, however, respond to the scene with any sense of emotional involvement for the figures lack visual credence. As a symbol of pietas in action the design is striking, but as an example of narrative the scene is of most limited merit.

Several coin-types issued during the social upheavals of Sulla's and Marius' struggles for control of Rome depict legendary events. In 89 B.C. the moneyer Lucius Titurius Sabinus issued two mythological denarius-types from the Mint of Rome; one shows two Romans carrying off Sabine brides (**Plate 1.7**),²⁴ while the other shows the punishment of Tarpeia (**Plate 1.8**).²⁵ Both types can be regarded as an attempt by the moneyer, who claimed descent from

²³ Crawford 1974, p.195.

²⁴ CRR, Number 698A, and Crawford 1974, p.352, n.344.1a - c.

²⁵ CRR, Number 699, and Crawford 1974, p.352, n.344.2a - c. See also Melville Jones 1990, p.299.

Titius Tatius, to glorify his ancient lineage.²⁶ They are examples of the monoscenic method of narrative depiction. The figures shown are engaged in specific and recognizable actions. On the first type two Romans are shown from a side view, facing each other. The women, held horizontally by their captors, are difficult to distinguish but for their feet, their heads (which are shown facing to the ground) and their outflung arms. The figures of the male soldiers carrying these women are ill proportioned. Their legs appear too elongated and slender to support the bulk of their torsos. Thus the figures depicted on this design, which evidently represents the infamous tale of the rape of the Sabine women,²⁷ are visually incredible.

The second denarius-type shows the traitress Tarpeia being crushed to death under the shields of two warriors.²⁸ The warriors hold up a shield each while several other shields can be seen covering Tarpeia's legs. While the victim's arm are outflung in a gesture of despair, her body, like those of her tormentors, reflects little muscling and appears restricted to the two dimensional plane.

While the specific nature of the actions depicted on these 'Rape of the Sabine Women' and 'Punishment of Tarpeia' types argues that they be considered to constitute examples of narrative art, their

²⁶ Brace 1979, p.30.

²⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book I.ix.

²⁸ For reference to the Punishment of Tarpeia see Ovid, Metamorphoses XIV. 778 - 780.

narrative quality is limited as the characters and their actions lack a spatial dimension, and the figures are schematically represented. Hence, despite the potential of their subject matter, these types fail to attract an emotional response from the viewer and may be judged 'poor' narrative.

In 82 - 81 B.C. the moneyer C.Mamilius Limetanus issued denarii from the Mint of Rome showing, on their reverses, the figure of Ulysses being greeted by the hound Argus (**Plate 1.9**).²⁹ C.Mamilius Limetanus' gens claimed descent from Mamilia, the daughter of Telegonus, the son of Ulysses.³⁰ As early as 170 B.C. the moneyer Lucius Mamilius of the Mamilian gens had issued asses and sextantes showing the figure of Ulysses, standing on the prow of a ship in an effort to highlight to the public his gens' claim of descent from Ulysses.³¹ On the denarius of C.Mamilius Limetanus the figure of Ulysses dominates the design. The die-artist makes good use of various planes of relief. The hero's cloak is depicted in low relief, his torso is high and well rounded, while his head appears on a plane between that of the cloak and his facing shoulder. The effect is to suggest an illusion of spatial depth in which the robust and organic figure of Ulysses strides forth. He is shown slightly to the left of the flan, facing toward the right. His right leg is bent back,

²⁹ CRR, Number 741, and Crawford 1974, p.375.

³⁰ Luce 1968, p.38, and Crawford 1974, p.377.

³¹ BMCR I, pp.97 - 98, Plate XII.7.

with its weight resting on the toes, while his left leg bears the weight of his body. His left hand grasps a notched walking staff while the right points towards the dog Argus which crouches at the bottom right of the flan. The dog's tail is raised and curves towards his master in a gesture of greeting. The gestures of Ulysses and his hound at their reunion give the design a unique momentary quality as the hero is welcomed after his nineteen year absence.³² The subtle manner in which the die-maker of this type creates this temporal dimension and the manner in which the figure of the hero is engraved engages and delights the viewer. For this reason, and the fact that the scene depicted is illustrative of a specific event in the legend of Ulysses, the type may be considered to be a good example of the monoscenic method of narrative depiction.

The moneyer Aulus Postumius Albinus issued denarii in Rome at some time between 81 and 79 B.C. depicting, on their reverses, a specific legendary sacrifice to Diana made at Rome (**Plate 2.1**).³³ While the scene lacks action, it does reflect a somewhat limited desire by the engraver to set the figures of the priest and the sacrificial victim within a spatial context. To the right the togate figure of the priest is shown facing left and holding out in his right hand an object, variously identified as a branch³⁴ or an

³² Homer, Odyssey Book 17, 290 - 329.

³³ Crawford 1974, p.389, Plate XLVIII.4, Number 372/1.

³⁴ BMCRR I, p.351.

aspergillum,³⁵ over the figure of a horned bull. The victim faces to the right and is shown on a smaller scale than the priest. This change in scale may have been intended to serve to emphasize the significance of the human figure, or it may simply be due to the limitations of the scale of the coin-flan. The scene depicted on this denarius-type has been identified as the sacrifice to Diana made at Rome in 550 B.C.³⁶ and recorded by Livy:

Bos in Sabinis nata
cuidam patri familiae dicitur miranda magnitudine
ac specie; fixa per multas aetates cornua in vesti-
bulo templi Dianae monumentum ei fuere miraculo.
Habita, ut erat, res prodigii loco est; et cecinere
vates, cuius civitatis eam civis Dianae immolasset
ibi fore imperium;

Book I. xlv. 4 - 5

Livy goes on to record that the Sabine drove the victim to Rome, but was stopped at the shrine by a Roman priest and told to purify himself before sacrificing. "Quin tu ante vivo perfunderis flumine? Infima valle praefluit Tiberis."³⁷ While the Sabine was gone, the Roman sacrificed the victim in his place. These details of the story serve to highlight that the scene of the sacrifice was traditionally set

³⁵ Crawford 1974, p.389.

³⁶ Crawford 1974, p.389.

³⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book I.xlv.6.

on one of the hills overlooking the Tiber. It would appear that the die-engraver of the type was interested in indicating geological features, for the figures of the priest and animal are shown standing either side of an altar which sits on a rocky base of two rows of rounded protrusions, symbolizing boulders. It might be argued that these features were intended to represent the hilltop on which the shrine of Diana and its altar stood. If so the die-maker has attempted to create within the design a limited sense of spatial setting.

If one assumes that modern interpretations of the scene shown on this denarius-type are correct and that it depicts the specific sacrifice to Diana recorded by Livy,³⁸ the type may be judged to constitute an example of the monoscenic method of narrative depiction. The type is, however, of limited artistic worth. The representation of the geographical location of the place of sacrifice is highly stylized, and while the upper portion of the figure of the priest is robust and well rounded, his disproportionate legs destroy any illusion that he is an organic being. Similarly the sacrificial victim, reduced in scale perhaps to fit within the bounds of the flan, is ill-proportioned.

³⁸ While the obverse type of this denarius, which displays a bust of Diana, also serves to identify the reverse scene, there is a discrepancy between the scene as described by Livy and that depicted by the coin-design. Livy uses the word 'bos' as feminine when describing the victim, yet the animal shown on the coin is clearly male. While this may have been an error on the part of the engraver or the details of the story may have changed by the time Livy came to set them down, it is just possible that the scene may not be the specific act currently identified with the depiction.

Contemporaneous with the 'Sacrifice to Diana' denarius-type is a series of denarii issued from the Mint of Rome by the moneyer Lucius Voletius Strabo depicting on their reverses the abduction of Europa (**Plate 2.2**).³⁹ The depiction of the abduction of Europa on the reverse complements the obverse type, which shows a bust of Jupiter. While the scene of the abduction can be linked to a specific mythological event,⁴⁰ this example is of limited narrative interest. The figure of Europa is shown seated sidesaddle with her body facing to the front and her head turned to the right. Her right arm is raised and holds a veil which circles her head and upper torso while her left hand is placed over her chest. While these details of pose and the intricate manner in which the die-maker has engraved the drapery fold of her dress and veil are of some visual interest, the figure appears schematic. All sense of movement and action in the design are created by the bull, which is depicted facing to the left in an attitude of charging. Like the earlier types depicting horses of the charging Dioscuri, a sense of motion is created, but the design lacks a spatial dimension.⁴¹

³⁹ Crawford 1974, Plate XLVIII, Numbers 12 - 17. BMCR, Plate XLI.17, and CRR, Number 743. The reason behind the choice of the subject of Europa's abduction for this coin-type is unknown, but Lawrence 1935, p.219, suggests a possible connection between the moneyer and Spain.

⁴⁰ For reference to the abduction of Europa see, for example, Apollodorus, The Library III.i.1, and Ovid, Metamorphoses Book II. 865 - 875.

⁴¹ Two symbolic devices are used to fill the flan. Below the bull an ivy-leaf is shown, perhaps symbolic of Europa's role as a vegetation power, while behind it a winged thunderbolt, the symbol of Jupiter, is depicted. See Crawford 1974, p.391, who notes Cook, Zeus i.p.524.

The narrative qualities of the 'Abduction of Europa' type are extremely limited. While it serves to call to the viewer's mind the story of the events in which the depicted figure was involved, it does not truly illustrate any particular moment in the tale since its temporal aspect is vague and non-specific. The design fails to engage the viewer's attention as a scene of interesting and specific action in its own right and the figures, while recognizable individuals drawn from mythological tradition, are executed in a schematic manner. These judgements equally apply to denarii issued by Lucius Valerius Acisculus from Rome in 45 B.C. also depicting the abduction of Europa (**Plate 2.3**).⁴²

Between 81 and 77 B.C.⁴³ the moneyer C.Poblicius issued denarii from the Mint of Rome depicting Hercules' struggle with the Nemean lion (**Plate 2.4**).⁴⁴ In this narrative example the die-maker has established a quality of action which engages the viewer's interest in the struggle. On this coin-type the lion is shown grasping

⁴² BMCRR I, pp.535 - 536 identifies the scene as Valeria Luperca on a heifer, a story told by Plutarch, Parallel Lives VII.248. Crawford 1974, p.485, has convincingly argued that the scene, in fact, shows the abduction of Europa. Crawford 1974, Plate LVI.4, Number 474/1b.

⁴³ There is some debate over the date of issue of these coins. CRR, p.125, dates them between 78 and 77 B.C. BMCRR, I, p.365, dates them to 81 B.C., while Crawford 1974, p.396, dates them to 80 B.C. For a possible explanation of the choice of this type see Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae, 126, 'Publicia L.f.,'.

⁴⁴ CRR, Number 768. While Sydenham suggests the mint is an auxiliary Italian one, BMCRR I, p.365, and Crawford 1974, p.396, place the mint of origin at Rome. For reference to the legend of Hercules and the Nemean lion see, for example, Apollodorus, The Library II.v.1. Also see LIMC V, Herakles p.29, n.1957.

the hero's legs with its hind quarters as it attacks his left shoulder with its fangs. Hercules rests on his right leg as he wrestles with his foe. The figure of Hercules is robust and well muscled, especially around the buttocks and shoulder which are well rounded, reflecting the die-engraver's interest in depicting a visually credible representation of the human figure. While the head of the hero is, perhaps, a little ill proportioned and too large when compared with the hero's body, it would appear that this was done so that the die-artist had room in which to depict Hercules' facial features, particularly his downward gazing eye. The dynamic tension created by the powerful struggle of the hero and lion, each of which pushes against the other, is heightened by Hercules' attitude of concentration on his foe.

The depiction of Hercules' club, which lies at his feet, and his abandoned arrows and bow, which are to the left, may have been included in the design as allusions to earlier stages of the fight.⁴⁵ Snodgrass includes this kind of allusion, which he argues is a substitute for the actual depiction of earlier and later episodes, in what he calls the 'synoptic method' of narrative depiction.⁴⁶ His

⁴⁵ In his discussion of what he terms the 'synoptic method' of narrative, Snodgrass 1982, p.9, poses the question "What can the artist do if his subject is, say, Herakles and the Nemean Lion, and he wants to convey the tradition that Herakles tried in vain to pierce the lion's invulnerable hide with one weapon or another? The answer is that he often does quite a lot: he frequently shows Herakles' quiver hanging on a tree in the background, Herakles' club being held by Iolaos: all of these are surely meant as allusions to the earlier stages of the fight."

⁴⁶ Snodgrass 1982, pp.5 - 9.

definition of this method does not, however, make differentiation between scenes which transgress the limitations of the unity of time and place, and those which do not.⁴⁷ If it is assumed that there is a fundamental difference in method between narrative depictions in which time is not fixed, but transitory, and those (like the coin-type in question) which are based on the principle of the unity of time and place, the term 'synoptic method' must be dismissed. That the 'Hercules and the Nemean Lion' type depicts a single, specific action which is the focus of the viewer's attention argues that it may be considered an example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction.⁴⁸ Subtle allusions to previous phases of the struggle may urge the viewer to reflect upon elements of the storyline outside the strict confines of the illustrated action, but these are quite secondary to the specific action depicted, and the principle of the unity of time and place has not been transgressed by the artist.

Between 42 and 40 B.C. Sextus Pompey issued a series of denarii in Sicily depicting on their reverses the Catanaean brothers carrying off their parents (**Plate 2.5**).⁴⁹ While not being struck in Rome,

⁴⁷ For example Snodgrass 1982, pp.10 - 11, describes a Laconian cup as 'synoptic' and describes the 'simultaneous' actions of Odysseus depicted on it. Weitzmann 1970, p.13, describes the same cup as an example of the 'simultaneous method' because "... the archaic artist depicts three moments of the tale as one single scene without repeating any of its participants, thereby transgressing the limitations of the unity of time...". Snodgrass 1982, p.9, further argues that scenes which include allusion as substitutes for actions are 'synoptic' by extension, even though the limitations of the unity of time are adhered to by the artist.

⁴⁸ Weitzmann 1970, pp.14 - 16.

⁴⁹ BMCR II, Plate CXX.6 - 8, and Crawford 1974, p.520. LIMC I, Amphinomos et Anapias p.717, n.4. As noted above the subject of their pious
(Continued. ...

the type is of interest as not only had its subject matter been celebrated, on a different type, by the moneyer Marcus Herennius (**Plate 1.6**), but also it serves to illustrate a characteristic of Republican mythological types: the depiction of legendary characters in order to make symbolic and political statements, where art and narrative are of little or no concern to the die-maker.

The figures on the coin-type are schematically represented and their poses lack visual credence. On the right of the flan one of the brothers is shown moving towards the right holding aloft one of his parents, who looks back towards the centre of the flan. In terms of poses the group to the left of the field is a mirror reflection of that to the right. The centre of the flan is dominated by a figure of Neptune resting his right foot upon the prow of a ship. His inclusion in the design may have been intended to celebrate Pompey's victory over Q. Salvidienus Rufus, or his claim to be the 'Son of Neptune'.⁵⁰ The figure of Neptune not only posed a problem for the engraver in regard to the placement of the five figures of the design within the limited flan of the denarius, he is also the cause of a dilemma in the viewer's mind. Both parents face towards the centre, and according to the legend would thus be assumed to be looking at the destruction caused by the eruption of Mount Aetna. Instead the coin-type shows them facing the figure of Neptune. The die-

action had been celebrated on a coin of the moneyer Marcus Herennius issued at Rome between 108 and 107 B.C.

⁵⁰ BMCRR II, p.560.

engraver's composition does not agree with the known external reference and it is doubtful whether he intended to 'illustrate' the legend. This feature, combined with the total lack of spatial reference argue that this type should be regarded as a symbolic statement without narrative intention.

An 'Aeneas and Anchises' type, celebrated on aurei, was issued in Rome by the moneyer L.Livineius Regulus in 42 B.C. (**Plate 2.6**).⁵¹ The same subject matter had been carried on denarii issued by Julius Caesar in Africa.⁵² The reason for L.Livineius Regulus' choice of type was probably to re-emphasize the Julian gens' claim to descent from Iulus, in this case with the aim of glorifying Julius' successor, Octavius. The actual design is very similar to that issued by Marcus Herennius between 108 and 107 B.C. depicting one of the Catanaean brothers bearing his parent (**Plate 1.6**). The earlier type may have served as a model for the engraver of L.Livineius Regulus' type, for in both cases the pose of the carrying figure shows him advancing to the right, holding a figure in both upheld arms, and the carried figure looks back over his shoulder to the left of the field.

⁵¹ Crawford 1974, p.502, Plate LVIII Number 494/3a, BMCRR I, Numbers 4257 and 4258, CRR, Number 1104a. Also see LIMC I, Aineias p.389, n.129.

⁵² Crawford 1974, p.471, Plate IV Number 458/1, CRR Plate 27 Number 1013; see **Plate 2.7**, BMCRR, II, p.469, Numbers 31 - 36, and Plate CX.20, Voelkel 1949, p.35, and LIMC I, Aineias p.389, n.128. In terms of its art, the African denarius-type, minted between 47 and 46 B.C., is engraved in an extremely schematic manner. Aeneas' torso, head and left leg face to the front while his right leg and arm are shown from the side. Features such as his hair, eyes and the muscles of his torso are represented by small engraved circles and his face is so unnaturalistic as to appear almost comic. The figure of Anchises which sits atop Aeneas' left shoulder is disproportionate and unconvincing.

While the die-maker of the aureus-type shows some interest in depicting pose, as his carrying figure is depicted bending slightly under the weight of his burden, the figures, being very schematic, lack visual credence and fail to draw an emotional response from the viewer. Because of this the type may be judged 'poor' narrative.

SUMMARY

A survey of mythological coin-types issued during the Republican Era reveals that, from the narrative point of view, two major categories of mythological depiction can be distinguished: individuals engaged in typical or non-specific actions, and narrative depictions. In the first category can be placed those types which simply show legendary figures or characters in isolation or 'typical' action, such as the Dioscuri and 'She-wolf and Twins' types discussed (Plate 1.1 - 2), and depictions of the heroes Acteon,⁵³ Hercules,⁵⁴ Bellerophon,⁵⁵ and numerous mythical beasts such as the sphinx,⁵⁶ Pegasus,⁵⁷ Scylla,⁵⁸ Charybdis⁵⁹ and the griffin.⁶⁰ While these types, which simply depict legendary and heroic figures, are based

⁵³ CRR, Number 1103.

⁵⁴ CRR, Numbers 970 and 1051.

⁵⁵ CRR, Numbers 738 and 790.

⁵⁶ CRR, Number 983.

⁵⁷ CRR, Number 693.

⁵⁸ BMCRR II, p.563, Number 18 and Plate CXX.13 - 15.

⁵⁹ BMCRR II, p.562, Number 15 and Plate CXX.11.

⁶⁰ CRR, Number 773.

on mythological characters, they are of little narrative interest. The characters depicted are recognizable individuals, but they are not given temporal or spatial settings, and are not engaged in any specific action. Their purpose was to act as symbols to proclaim the glory of the state or its major families. They are schematic and lacking in detail and action, for the die-engraver's aim was to produce a simplified, recognizable design for a specific political purpose, not to relate for their own sake details of the acts and events which were traditionally connected with the portrayed characters.

The second category of Republican mythological depiction, narrative, encompasses those types showing recognizable individuals engaged in specific actions illustrative of external references. Within the category of 'narrative art' two quite distinct classes of expression can be observed, based on the narrative qualities of the works. The basic criterion by which the narrative qualities of a type may be judged is the degree to which it engages the viewer's attention and encourages him to make an emotional response to the depiction. The die-artist can encourage such a response by depicting his figures in a naturalistic and visually credible manner, by representing psychological drama or physical action, and by setting the action within a visually credible and stimulating spatial dimension. Those narrative types which portray these characteristics may be considered 'good' narrative, those which do not 'poor' narrative. To the first class of 'good' narrative may be assigned the Republican types depicting Hercules' struggle with the centaur (**Plate 1.3**), the Cerynaian

stag (**Plate 1.4**) and the Nemean lion (**Plate 2.4**), and other types such as the 'Return of Ulysses' (**Plate 1.9**).

To the second class, 'poor' narrative depiction, may be assigned those types which show specific but schematically represented figures engaged in individual yet unstimulating actions, without spatial reference. Types depicting Anapias and/or Amphinomus (**Plates 1.6 and 2.5**), the abductions of the Sabine women (**Plate 1.7**), and the death of Tarpeia (**Plate 1.8**) are characteristic of this class of numismatic narrative art.

Despite their varying narrative qualities it should be remembered that most mythological depictions were designed primarily to make a political statement or throw glory on the gens of the moneyer. In some cases the intended message of the type is now unclear, while others, such as Lucius Titurius Sabinus' claim of descent from Titius Tatius and C.Mamilius Limetanus' claim of descent from Ulysses, are recognizable. In these cases the intended reference could only be made clear through the depiction of action: discovery in the case of Faustulus, the carrying off of the women and crushing of Tarpeia in the case of Lucius Titurius Sabinus, and the home-coming in the case of Ulysses. It could be argued that the primary aim of the die-cutters of these types was not to depict action for its own sake; rather action was included in the design because it aided the conveyance of the political message. Consideration of the quality of the action depicted and the naturalistic representation of the figures involved, while taken into account by some die-engravers, such as those of the

'Hercules and the Nemean Lion' (**Plate 2.4**) and the 'Return of Ulysses' (**Plate 1.9**) types, were artistic ideals of secondary importance. Gardner expresses the view that Republican coins, " ... (while) often of interest from the historic and religious points of view, are from the point of view of art contemptible. They seem almost like the work of children, telling their story clearly enough, but without the least beauty of design or accuracy of execution."⁶¹ Although it cannot be denied that many coin-types of the era do display these characteristics, this judgement is not entirely supported by the evidence of the finer narrative types struck during the Republican period.

It must be noted that mythological narrative art in Roman mint production developed not from the Greek traditions apparent on some trientes whose depictions of Hercules which appear so full of action and re-action (**Plate 1.3 - 4**), but rather out of utilitarian, political desires. Gaius Renius was the first to exploit the political potential of the coin-flan for the glorification of his gens, and other moneyers followed his example by numismatically celebrating legendary events to do likewise. That mythological narrative art was introduced to the coinage of Rome for a specific, political reason helps to explain not only the generally poor artistic quality of such types, but also their almost complete disappearance from the coinage after the introduction of the new political order established by Augustus. Roman numismatic mythological narrative depiction, albeit an independent creation, was never truly developed as an art form by the Republican die-makers.

⁶¹ Gardner 1917, p.24.

CHAPTER TWO

AUGUSTUS TO TRAJAN

Mythological coin-types struck at Rome during the Augustan and Julio-Claudian periods were limited to a few issued in 18 B.C. As this date would suggest, these types were totally dominated by the established Republican conventions. Their aim, as under the Republic, was to highlight the heroic or divine origins of the issuing moneyers' gens. In authorizing such issues and allowing such Republican traditions to survive, Augustus might have wished to be seen to demonstrate his claim to be the 'Restorer of the Republic', although he soon after felt secure enough to abandon the practice of allowing coinage to be struck in any but his name.¹

The mythological types of the 18 B.C. issue generally fall into the category of simple depictions of legendary characters, shown in static poses and lacking temporal dimension or spatial setting. The images of Pegasus with raised wings (**Plate 3.1**)² and a siren playing the flutes (**Plate 3.2**)³ depicted on coins issued by P.Petronius Turpilianus, are probably symbolic references to the dramatist Sextus Turpilius, the so-called 'Novella Siren'.⁴ Both types totally lack narrative interest. P.Petronius Turpilianus also issued a denarius type showing the death of Tarpeia (**Plate 3.3**),⁵

¹ Res Gestae Divi Augusti 1.1 and 34.1. For discussion of the changing nature of the relationship between Augustus and the moneyers, see Wallace-Hadrill 1986, pp.77f.

² BMCRE I, Augustus Numbers 23 - 26.

³ BMCRE I, Augustus Numbers 27 - 28.

⁴ BMCRE I, p.ciii. See also Melville Jones 1990, pp.239 - 240, 291.

⁵ BMCRE I, Augustus Numbers 29 - 34. See also Melville Jones 1990, p.299.

a subject depicted earlier on the coinage by Lucius Titurius Sabinus (**Plate 1.8**).⁶ P.Petronius Turpilianus too claimed Sabine origins.⁷ On his denarius type Tarpeia is shown buried up to her waist by shields, with her hands thrown upwards in a gesture of despair. Like its Republican predecessor, the type is so lacking in visual credence that it holds little interest for the viewer and the gesture, which has the potential to inspire a psychological response, has been reduced to a simplified sign symbolic of hopelessness.

It should be remembered that narrative mythological types were by no means common during the Republican era, and when they appeared it was often to make a political statement, usually concerning the divine or heroic founder of a particular moneyer's gens. Clearly such a purpose was no longer valid under an Imperial system which allowed no individual to compete for the public eye with the emperor, and such coin-types disappear after 18 B.C.. However Augustus and the Julio-Claudian emperors claimed descent from Iulus, a claim which Julius Caesar and L.Livineius Regulus had emphasized on coins minted between 48 and 39 B.C. (**Plate 2.6 - 7**). Why did not the early emperors use their control over the mint to re-emphasize this particular legend?⁸ It clearly remained a significant aspect of the Julian

⁶ See Chapter One, pp.9 - 10.

⁷ Mattingly, BMCRE I. p.cii, suggests that the type may have been a reference to Vergil's home, Parthenope. Wallace-Hadrill 1986, p.77, suggests "... Tarpeia could well be a punning reference to Turpilianus."

⁸ Weigel 1984, p.189, also notes: "It is somewhat surprising that the type [Aeneas and Anchises issued under Antoninus Pius] was not used by Augustus or his successors in the first century, in the light of the popularity of Vergil's
(Continued. ...

gens' tradition, and statues of Aeneas were erected in Augustus' forum⁹ and later on the Temple of the Divine Augustus.¹⁰ It is similarly incongruous, given Augustus' personal interest in Roman traditions, and the flowering of written mythological and legendary events led by Vergil, Livy and Ovid which took place during his principate, that so few examples of mythological types were issued by the Imperial Mint of Rome during the Augustan period. It was not until the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius that this situation was redressed.

While the official gods and goddesses of Rome continued to be celebrated on the coinage of the Julio-Claudian period and

Aeneid." Hannestad 1986, p.213, argues that "Although Augustus has employed the Aeneas myth as a unifying factor, it was still tainted in his time by being a Republican pedigree myth. Thus Caesar and his forefathers had used this very legend in the contest with other great Republican gentes as to who, by means of historical manipulation, could furnish himself with the most noble antecedents. With Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, the political situation was totally changed - for the sole reason that all these Republican families were extinct. The foundation legends were now common property, and in their renewed use [during the second century] it is emphasized that the Empire has a common Greek-Roman past." This suggestion does not, however, explain why a 'tainted' myth would be celebrated in monumental sculpture (see below Note 9, and **Figure XXVII**), but not in miniature relief on the coinage. Zanker 1988, p.193, suggests that "When the *divi filius* [Octavian] first appeared to claim his inheritance, he had seized upon the mythical tradition of the Julian family, effectively capitalizing on his supposed descent from Venus and Aeneas Then, however, he cast himself as saviour and as protégé of Apollo, with no precedent in Roman history. It was only with the naming of his grandchildren as successors that the use of family mythology was revived, though not this time for personal self-glorification, as in the struggle with Marc Antony [see Chapter One, p.20 and Notes 51f.]." If one accepts this view, it would still seem paradoxical that the Aeneas story was not celebrated on the coinage, even after the elevation of the two princes. Zanker 1988, p.215f. demonstrates that claims for Gaius and Lucius Caesar's descent from Venus were by no means ignored, but on the coinage symbolic allusions were used in the place of depictions of Aeneas.

⁹ Ovid, Fasti V.563. See also Zanker 1988, pp.210f.

¹⁰ The group can be observed on coin-types depicting the temple struck by Gaius. Breglia 1968, p.51; see **Figure XVIII**.

throughout the infamous Year of the Four Emperors, the heroes and beasts of Rome's legendary past all but disappeared from numismatic view as the emperors stressed their own legitimacy and the political, social and military achievements of their reign. When mythological figures do appear on the coinage they are not of primary importance to the design. For example, while a sestertius-type issued by the emperor Galba shows Aeneas bearing Anchises on his shoulders and leading his son Ascanius, the group is shown on a representation of an altar and clearly to be interpreted as representing a relief carving decorating the structure.¹¹

It was not until Flavian times that the Mint of Rome re-introduced mythological figures to the coinage, and these were almost direct copies of earlier types. In A.D. 76 Domitian, under Vespasian, re-issued the Pegasus type of P.Petronius Turpilianus (**Plate 3.4**).¹² Like its Augustan prototype (**Plate 3.1**), this type is not narrative. The following year Domitian issued aurei and denarii depicting on their reverses the 'She-wolf and Twins' motif, with a boat shown beneath in the exergue (**Plate 3.5**).¹³ This type, based on an earlier Republican coin-type, may well have been symbolic of the 'restoration of Rome' claimed by Vespasian after his victory in the Civil War of A.D. 69, and to

¹¹ Galinsky 1969, Figure 4.

¹² BMCRE II, Vespasian Numbers 193 - 19. Mattingly, p.xi, suggests that this may have been meant as a compliment to Domitian's own poetic indulgences, recorded by Suetonius, Domitian 2. See also Melville Jones 1990, pp.239 - 240.

¹³ BMCRE II, Vespasian Numbers 237 - 242.

re-appeared on a hybrid denarius with an obverse-type of Titus (Plate 3.6).¹⁴ It has been suggested that "The representation of the boat refers to the legend wherein the twins ... were ordered to be drowned in the Tiber by King Amulius ... but were set adrift in a small boat, or basket."¹⁵ It might be argued that, since the depiction of the water-craft may serve as a symbolic allusion to an earlier event in the story of the twins' childhood, the scene carried on these coin-types could be classified as an example of the 'synoptic' mode of narrative.¹⁶ While the presence of the water-craft may cause one to reflect on events leading to the suckling of the twins, such reflections are quite secondary to the message of the motif depicted above it. Indeed the boat appears to have been introduced to the design for the practical purpose of filling the exergue rather than for the narrative concern of aiding in 'telling the story'. Lacking spatial setting and stimulating action the whole design is dominated by the motif of the 'She-wolf and Twins'. It is symbolic rather than 'illustrative' in intent.¹⁷

The reign of Nerva saw no mythological numismatic depictions issued by the Mint of Rome. It was under his Imperial successor, Trajan, that the restoration of Republican coin-types

¹⁴ BMCRE I, Titus Number 145.

¹⁵ Numismatic Fine Arts 1988, Number 158 (C.Lorber & D.R.Sear). For details of these events see Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book 1.iv.

¹⁶ See Snodgrass 1982, pp.10 - 11. Also see Chapter One, Notes 45f.

¹⁷ Giglioli 1941, p.115 and Figure 4, notes a sestertius-type of Vespasian depicting the she-wolf and twins as a minor compositional element.

which had begun during the Flavian era was to reach its climax. Among the numerous coin-types restored under Trajan was a significant number of mythological depictions including heroic figures and events. Republican denarius-types showing the Dioscuri (**Plate 3.7**),¹⁸ Pegasus (**Plate 3.8**),¹⁹ the Return of Ulysses (**Plate 3.9**),²⁰ Aeneas bearing Anchises (**Plate 3.10**),²¹ Hercules (**Plate 3.11**),²² the Catanaean brothers carrying their parents (**Plate 3.12**),²³ and Europa's abduction (**Plate 3.13**)²⁴ were all included in Trajan's 'restoration' issue. While these types are purely retrospective copies and as such tell little of the die-engraver's art during Trajanic times, they do give us an important insight into the policies of the minting authorities. The 'restoration' issues, prompted by the melting down of worn coinage in A.D. 107, reflects a "... distinct attempt to recall the memory of the legendary and historical glories of the Roman Republic ... the main object of the restoration of Republican denarii seems to have been to revive the glorious memories of the old days and to link them up with the new glories of the Empire,

¹⁸ BMCRE III, p.138, Plate 22.4.

¹⁹ BMCRE III, Trajan Number 675.

²⁰ BMCRE III, Trajan Number 678.

²¹ BMCRE III, p.141, Plate 23.4.

²² BMCRE III, p.141, Plate 23.6.

²³ BMCRE III, Trajan Number 693, Plate 23.14.

²⁴ BMCRE III, p.141, Plate 23.7.

while at the same time the claims of religion and the ancestral honours of the Roman aristocracy were not entirely forgotten."²⁵

The Trajanic period did not see the introduction of any new mythological types. However, it should be seen as a significant period in the development of numismatic mythological depiction, for it witnessed a renewal of interest in these types after their almost complete absence for most of the pre-Trajanic Imperial period. It is possible that the restoration of the Republican mythological types which took place under Trajan caught the attention and imagination of the Imperial die-engravers working during the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, under whom the narrative potential of this medium was to reach its highest level of artistic expression.

SUMMARY

Mythological depictions of the Republican era were intended to serve a specific function - to proclaim the glory of the state or its major families. While the function of proclaiming the glory of a moneyer's gens remained relevant in the earliest days of the Empire, it was rejected under Augustus and mythological depictions all but disappear during the Julio-Claudian dynasty and

²⁵ BMCRE III, pp. 271 - 275. Also see Levick 1982, p.116.

the Year of the Four Emperors. That the emperors themselves, particularly those claiming descent from Iulus, failed to make use of such a traditional function of mythological numismatic depictions appears paradoxical.

The period up to the reign of Hadrian foreshadowed the general course of mythological numismatic narration throughout the Imperial period. It serves to illustrate that narrative is but one category of mythological depiction, and that it can be divided into distinct classes based on the internal artistic qualities of the designs. Examples of 'good' numismatic narrative art have been seen to be rare during the Republican period, and were totally lacking in the pre-Hadrianic Imperial period. With the exceptions of the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, such depictions were to remain comparatively rare during the course of Imperial minting. The 'retrospective' nature of most of the early Imperial mythological types, based largely as they were on earlier works, will also be seen to be a recurring feature of Imperial mythological numismatic depiction.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HADRIANIC PERIOD

A) NON-NARRATIVE AND 'OUASI-NARRATIVE' **MYTHOLOGICAL NUMISMATIC DEPICTIONS**

B) MYTHOLOGICAL NUMISMATIC **NARRATIVE ART**

A) NON-NARRATIVE AND 'QUASI-NARRATIVE' **MYTHOLOGICAL NUMISMATIC DEPICTIONS**

Imperial numismatic mythological design in the pre-Hadrianic period lacked three critical elements of 'good narrative art': physical or psychological action, visually convincing figures, and a sense of temporal and spatial setting in which action may occur. The Jupiter and Amalthea type issued under Hadrian is characteristic in this respect (Plate 4.1).¹ This pseudo-medallion displays on its reverse a scene of Jupiter, as a child, being suckled by the she-goat Amalthea. The subject matter is clearly based on Greek tradition, and indeed a similar, although more elaborate scene is shown on a coin of Aegium.² Stevenson has argued that an aureus-type issued in the name of Domitian under Titus which bears the reverse legend **PRINCEPS IUVENTUTIS** and shows a goat standing amidst a laurel wreath was intended to allude to Amalthea as 'Nutrix Jovis Infantis'.³ Whereas the aureus-type of Domitian was conceived in a purely schematic mode, the design of the Hadrianic medallion appears somewhat more naturalistic. The figure of Amalthea occupies the centre of the flan. She is shown facing right with her head lowered and limbs spread. Beneath her udder the young Jupiter is depicted facing left with his right arm extended to grasp a teat.

¹ Strack 1933, Tav.XVI.444. LIMC I, Amaltheia p.583, n.14. Museo Nazionale Romano, Gneecchi Collection 1.14.

² Imhoof-Blumer and Gardner 1885, p.85.

³ Stevenson 1889, p.40.

In composition it is most similar to the 'She-wolf and Twins' motif which continued to be struck on coins and medallions during the Hadrianic period (**Plate 4.2 - 5**).⁴ Both types depict recognizable mythological characters in a passive scene which, while alluding to a legendary incident, lacks action in itself and is symbolic in intent.

It was during the Hadrianic period that the narrative possibilities of the medallion-flan were first explored by the die-engravers of Rome. The significance of the Hadrianic period for medallion- types in general and mythological types in particular has been noted by Toynbee: "The striking for the first time of an extensive series of bronze medallions proper took place during Hadrian's principate, and thus it is to the Hadrianic period that the art of medal-engraving in the Imperial Age really owes its origins. To the fact that in this sphere, at any rate, the Hadrianic age was no mere 'classicising' interlude but witnessed a new departure, opening up a new field for art and providing a source of inspiration for the art of succeeding generations, the magnificent and extensive series of bronze medallions issued under Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus bears striking testimony. The essential nature of medallions as distinct from coins of necessity implies the absence of that universal interest, that wide appeal to the Roman world as a whole which is so eminently characteristic of the Roman Imperial coinage.

⁴ BMCRE III, Hadrian Numbers 444 - 449; see **Plate 4.2 - 3**. Gneecchi 1912, Tavv. 38.7 and 159.8 (Cabinet des Médailles Number 71); see **Plate 4.4 - 5**.

Issued under the Emperor's personal supervision as 'medals' or presentation pieces for distribution within a comparatively small circle of special persons, the choice of types, in the first place, could be less limited and conventional, the wealth of allusion richer and more varied, the references more personal and less obvious. In the second place, more time and skill could be expended on execution and technique, while the actual size of the field afforded the designer greater scope. The medallion can often, indeed, lay claim to an artistic beauty in its own way unsurpassed in the history of ancient numismatics."⁵

Before examining in detail the Hadrianic mythological medallions it is necessary to note that the reign of Hadrian is a period of great chronological difficulty for the numismatic art-historian. The medallions, and indeed much of the everyday coinage issued during the period of Hadrian's third consulship, A.D. 119 to 138, are difficult to date accurately.⁶ Furthermore it has been argued that a series of posthumous 'Hadrianic' medallions was issued during the reign of Antoninus Pius.⁷ Artistic developments and innovations are, therefore, most difficult to trace, for the medallic pieces themselves cannot be placed within a fixed chronology. In view of this limitation Hadrianic mythological medallions will be arranged and discussed

⁵ Toynbee 1967, p.xxix.

⁶ For discussion of the dating and arrangement of the coinage issued during the period of Hadrian's third consulship, see Hill 1970, pp.52 - 77 and Hill 1971.

⁷ Pond Rothman 1978. Kaiser-Raiss 1981, argues against Pond Rothman's findings. See Appendix One, Some Posthumous Hadrianic Medallions.

in this thesis according to the artistic concerns they illustrate, with those examples which may have been issued posthumously being noted. (Also see Appendix One, Some Posthumous Hadrianic Medallions).

Several scenes of typical action depicted on medallion reverses during the Hadrianic period are worthy of detailed examination. While they do not constitute true narrative because they are 'typical' scenes and lack a specific external reference, they do illustrate the medallion-designers' ability to depict visually convincing human figures in complex poses amid stimulating settings. Perhaps the two most striking examples of non- or 'quasi'-narrative reverse scenes from the period in question are those showing Pan at rest and Apollo Musagetes.⁸

A strong Greek influence is evident on a medallic reverse type depicting the god Pan which was issued during the period of Hadrian's third consulship (Plate 4.6(a) - (b)).⁹ While the Pan medallion-type is not truly narrative, lacking specific action and an external reference, it reflects several important aspects of

⁸ A further non-narrative medallion-type of special significance is that depicting a figure, identified as Silvanus, making sacrifice. The type has been classified by Pond Rothman 1978, pp.118f., as being posthumously issued in the name of Hadrian by Antoninus Pius. Kaiser-Raiss 1981, p.192, argues against Pond Rothman's classification of such pieces. For a more detailed examination of this issue and these examples, see Appendix One, Some Posthumous Hadrianic Medallions.

⁹ Gnechi 1912, Tav. 146.10. Also Cohen 1880, Vol.II Hadrian Number 1494. The obverse legend HADRIANUS AUG COS III P P would appear to date this piece, and the 'Apollo Musagetes' and 'Aeneid' medallion-types which share this legend (see below Plates 4.7 and 6.2) to the period after A.D. 128. See Hill 1970, p.52.

the narrative potential of the medallion face. The figure of Pan, who is shown seated on a rocky outcrop in the centre of the flan, reflects the die-engraver's desire to depict the human figure in a naturalistic and organic manner. His beardless head is turned to the right while the torso, draped in a nebris, faces the viewer. The torso is supported by his left arm which rests on a short column to the right. His right arm rests on his extended right leg, although a part of this arm is obscured by the raised left knee. This pose may be compared with that of a figure, possibly Ares, shown on a gem of the Hellenistic period (Figure I).¹⁰ Although the resting leg on the 'Ares' gem-design is the right, not the left as shown on the Pan medallion-type, the similarities between these two examples of miniature engraving suggests the possibility of a sculptural prototype on which these works may have been modelled, perhaps the so-called Ares Ludovisi.¹¹ If so, this example would serve to emphasize the significance of Greek inspiration for Hadrian's die-types. The engraver has successfully adapted the original pose to create a visually credible representation of the human figure in the miniature relief afforded by the medallion-flan.

The die-engraver of this Pan type was interested in portraying landscape elements so as to suggest a spatial setting. To the left of the figure of Pan a circular altar is depicted, lighted and decorated with garlands. To the right of the cippus on which the

¹⁰ BMQ (1928) V.33, Plate LII.b. LIMC II, Ares p.481, n.24.

¹¹ Robertson 1975, p.456 and pp.474f.

young god rests his left arm is a dog, shown with its head uplifted and facing Pan.¹² To the extreme right of the scene a tree, most likely an oak (sacred to Pan), curves its trunk in a circular fashion around the sweep of the flank and over the god's head. All the various components of the scene, the god, altar, rock, cippus, dog and tree which stand on a heavy base-line which traverses the lower portion of the field, are compositionally well balanced, and landscape elements serve to establish a sense of spatial setting and heighten visual interest in the design.

A single surviving medallion depicts Apollo Musagetes¹³ in the company of three Muses (Plate 4.7).¹⁴ The spatial

¹² Murray 1935, pp.150 - 151, proposes that the presence of the animal suggests that the god should be interpreted as Pan Lupercus, the teacher of the use of dogs to men. It is possible then that the type celebrates Pan's beneficence in aiding man in his mastery of herding and agriculture.

¹³ He is identified as Apollo Palatinus and Musagetes by Toynbee 1944, p.137, and as Apollo Citharoedus by Grueber 1874, p.7. Pond Rothman 1978, p.124, identifies him as Apollo Musagetes. For the sake of this thesis the figure will be called 'Apollo Musagetes'.

¹⁴ Gneecchi 1912, Tav.40.7, and British Museum, 230 Tray 4. It must be noted that Pond Rothman 1978, pp.124 - 125, suggests that the piece may have been struck by Antoninus Pius as part of a posthumous series of medallions issued in the name of Hadrian "... even though it exhibits none of the customary clues to such an origin." Pond Rothman bases her suggestion on two points; first that "... an Apollo type never occurs in the regular Roman coinage ... In contrast, Apollo figures frequently in both the coins and medallions of Antoninus." Secondly, she notes that the obverse type "... was used on only two other occasions, for the posthumous medallions with the Aeneas [called in this thesis the 'Aeneid' medallion-type] and Dionysus reverses." In regard to her first point, it should be noted that the figures of Pan, Minerva and Neptune, and Hercules with the Hesperides (all shown on medallions which Pond Rothman 1978, p.125, note 49, classifies as belonging to Hadrian's reign) were similarly unknown from Roman numismatic production before the time of Hadrian's medallion issues. The suggestion that the Apollo Musagetes type was issued posthumously because its iconography and subject matter are novel thus appears flawed. Kaiser-Raiss 1981, pp. 193 - 194, similarly argues against Pond Rothman's 'posthumous' attribution of these types. Furthermore her arguments for the posthumous issuing of the 'Aeneid' medallion are questionable; see below Note 56.

relationships between the various figures and the naturalistic poses in which they are depicted engages the viewer's attention. The figure of Apollo Musagetes dominates the design. He is spatially limited to the extreme left of the flan and is shown on a larger scale than the figures of the Muses who stand before him. The god rests on a large rock and faces to the right. The upper torso appears to lean backwards, with the head bowed forward in an attitude of concentration as he looks down at the lyre resting on his lap. The delicate folds of a pallium¹⁵ fall between his knees.

Three Muses are depicted occupying the centre and right of the medallion-flan. The Muse closest to Apollo stands in the middle of the flan. She is shown from the front, but the angle of her head and the bend of her left leg suggest that she is turned slightly to the left towards the god playing. To the right of this Muse one of her sisters is shown slightly leaning. Her legs are bent and she appears to rest her arms on a column or cippus. Grueber identifies her as Polyhymnia, and notes that she is shown to be of a shorter stature than the other Muses.¹⁶ This pose, and her smaller stance, allows one to view a third sister standing behind her. She appears to be standing upright and faces to the left. Her lower portions are obscured by the figure in front. The various Muses' drapery is engraved in fine detail; falling in heavy

¹⁵ Grueber 1874, p.7.

¹⁶ Grueber 1874, p.7.

folds here, and stretched tight there so as to suggest the presence of organic bodies beneath.

While the scene depicted on this medallion reverse is without specific setting, the poses of the various figures and their compositional relationship to each other centre attention on Apollo's performance. The lyre itself is the focus of the depiction and the figures are united in their concentration on it. The die-maker has engraved delicate lines representing the instrument's strings, and Apollo's right hand is shown with fingers spread so as to suggest that he is the act of plucking them. The attentiveness of the various figures to this action creates a strong sense of temporal setting by giving the design an enhanced momentary quality. Notwithstanding these exceptional narrative features, which perhaps warrant the use of the term 'quasi-narrative' in describing this medallion, the scene is not illustrative of a known external mythological reference and is not related to any specific temporal or spatial setting.

Toynbee finds similarities between this medallion-design and a wall painting from the Villa of Hadrian at Tivoli.¹⁷ She implies that the medallion-design may have been inspired by this painting, or more likely that both were inspired by some lost masterpiece. The medallion-design, while similar in some features to the surviving painting (Figures II - III),¹⁸ does differ from it in

¹⁷ Toynbee 1944, p.220

¹⁸ Reinach 1922, Plate VIII.6, and Aurigemma 1961, Figure 191.

several important aspects. Firstly, as shown above, the god Apollo is depicted playing a lyre on the medallion. In the painting he holds a scroll and the four (or five?) Muses shown turn to each other in discussion while Apollo's attention is drawn to them. Secondly the figure of Apollo is painted on the same scale as those of the Muses and, as he is seated, he is overshadowed by the standing sisters. While the personages depicted in both medallion and painting are quite similar and the basic arrangement of the figures, with Apollo seated to the left and the sisters standing to the right, are common features of both works, the die-engraver's scene differs markedly from the painting. It is possible that the medallion-engraver of this type was inspired by either an early Hellenistic sculptural group of Apollo and the Muses, or perhaps the group sculptured by Philiskos that was removed to Rome.¹⁹ If a relationship does exist between these works the die-engraver of the medallion-design clearly cannot be accused of simple copying. Indeed the medallion is a superb example of the medallion-engraver's ability to harmoniously balance figures in a variety of poses into a complex, integrated composition well suited to a circular flan.

The narrative potentials of the medallion-flan, evident from the surviving examples of the Pan and Apollo Musagetes types indicate that the die-engravers had the artistic capability, interest and technical skills to produce scenes of specific mythological individuals and actions (albeit 'typical' actions) in a realistic

¹⁹ Robertson 1975, p.564.

manner. It was under Hadrian that these skills were first applied to represent truly narrative mythological scenes, that is scenes involving identifiable individuals engaged in specific action illustrative of a known external reference, on the reverse faces of Roman medallions.

The artistic features of the Pan and Apollo Musagetes types are so unlike the Imperial mythological numismatic depictions which preceded them as to appear revolutionary. It might be argued that the inspiration for this artistic development came from Greek die-engravers working in the capital, with the encouragement of the philhellenic Hadrian. The evidence brought forward by Seltman for the existence of a Greek die-maker (the so-called 'Alpheios engraver'), working under Hadrian,²⁰ the sudden appearance on the medallions of artistic features which had not been developed in Roman mint production during the pre-Hadrianic period, and the depiction of Greek myths and figures (such as Pan, Apollo Musagetes, Minerva and Neptune, and Jupiter and Amalthea), strongly suggest the introduction of a Greek tradition or school to the medallion-engraving activities of the Mint of Rome.

However the existence of such a tradition is not in itself enough to explain the artistic developments which occurred during the reign of Hadrian and were to continue during the principate of his successor. It has been noted by Suetonius, for

²⁰ Seltman 1948, p.83. Also see Appendix One, Some Posthumous Hadrianic Medallions.

example, that the Greek master seal-engraver Dioscurides worked in Rome under Augustus,²¹ and yet mythological numismatic types issued from the capital during his reign reflect a complete lack of Greek artistic styles. The numismatic artist of Imperial Rome was subject to the Imperial will, and could only express his talents if they were perceived to serve the interests of the emperor. Augustus, notwithstanding his interest in Greek artistic traditions exemplified in his use of copies of the Caryatids in his forum,²² did not allow Greek artistic traditions to influence Roman mythological depictions on his coinage. The emperor Hadrian, on the other hand, appears to have used the artists available to him to satisfy his personal philhellenic interests in the celebration of Greek traditions on medallion-flans.

The influence of Greek artistic conventions in the issue of coinage, especially in regard to the depiction of allegorical figures, is attested by the Hadrianic 'Province' series.²³ In regard to numismatic mythological depictions, however, Greek

²¹ Suetonius, *Augustus* Chapter 50.

²² Ward-Perkins 1970, p.32, Figure 91.

²³ Toynbee 1967, pp.24 - 159. Hamberg 1968, p.76 notes: "It is true that the Hadrianic art of coining presents characteristic features that distinguish it from earlier and later periods: it has even been thought possible to detect an abrupt stylistic manifestation towards the end of the 120's in the very spirit that pervaded such a large part of the Imperial requisitions under Hadrian." Furthermore Mattingly, *BMCRE III*, p.cxiii, notes that "It is in the great 'Cos.III' issues, circa A.D. 124/5-early 128, that the new life of Hadrianic art bursts through and dominates the whole coinage... Even in the reverse types there is a real freedom and life. The new tendency, once established, maintains itself and rules the coinage during the rest of the reign, reaching its climax in the great series of the Provinces and the Armies, in which reverse type as well as obverse is made to serve a strong artistic purpose. The change in style is so definite and even violent that we are bound to postulate large changes in the personnel of the mint."

influences during the Hadrianic period appear restricted to the medallions.²⁴ Several factors may help to explain this restriction. Firstly the medallion-flan offers the die-cutter a larger working area and hence allows for the depiction of more detail than the coin-flans of the regular issues. Secondly it is likely that the engravers took more time and care over cutting dies used for medallion striking as the pieces were probably intended to be given away by the emperor as personal gifts. Finally the fact that the medallions were designed for a restricted circulation may have inspired greater freedom of expression than was allowed by the conventions of 'everyday' die-engraving.

B) MYTHOLOGICAL NUMISMATIC NARRATIVE

ART

Three medallion-types from the Hadrianic period depict specific, recognizable scenes from mythology: 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides', 'Minerva and Neptune Contesting the Domination of Attica', and scenes from the Aeneid. The scenes depicted on these medallions are not 'typical' depictions like those of Pan and Apollo Musagetes discussed above. They may be considered to constitute narrative depictions for they show recognizable individuals engaged in specific actions or events

²⁴ The extent to which Hadrian's philhellenic interests influenced the production of medallions bearing Greek mythological subject-matter has been called into question by Pond Rothman 1978, pp.126 - 127. See Chapter Four.B, Note 90.

which are illustrative of known external references. The die-engraver of these medallions relies on the viewer's knowledge of the story on which they are based, an external reference, in order that the viewer will comprehend the full significance of the depiction. The importance of these scenes lies not only in their artistic merit, but also in the fact that they are the first mythological narrative types to be carried on Imperial medallions. As such they lay the foundation for an impressive series issued by Hadrian's successor.

Although the surviving example of the 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' medallion-type is worn, many of the major narrative features of the work can be observed (Plate 5.1).²⁵ This type, like the 'Minerva and Neptune Contesting the Domination of Attica' type discussed below, is an example of the monoscenic method of narrative depiction, with the scene showing a single, significant moment of the story. In these cases the die-engravers have chosen not to depict violent action, but rather relatively quiet scenes, interludes of psychological tension between dramatic physical events. The 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' type depicts a scene based on the legendary tradition which reports that Hercules himself entered the garden. According to this tradition the only violent action involved on this labour was the decapitation of Ladon.²⁶ Although the die-engraver chose not to show this bloody deed, the

²⁵ Gnechi 1912, Tav. 42.1.

²⁶ For the tradition that Hercules himself, and not Atlas, entered the garden, see Apollodorus, *The Library* II.v.11.

scene does reflect some psychological drama. It represents, according to this tradition, the last of Hercules' heroic Twelve Labours and was to lead eventually to his immortality.

The die-engraver of the 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' medallion-type has created a design which engages the viewer's attention through his use of compositional devices and the manner in which he has depicted the figures. The naked figure of the hero stands to the left, facing to the front but slightly turned to the right. Hercules' right arm is shown resting on his club, and he holds the lion skin in his left. The flan is divided vertically down the centre by a tree, protected by the serpent Ladon which coils around its trunk. To the right of the tree the Hesperides are depicted, turned to look at Hercules whose figure is shown on a slightly larger scale than that of the females. The naturalistic poses of these figures and their balanced and harmonious compositional relationships to each other serve to heighten their visual credence and the viewer's interest in the design, features it shares with the 'quasi-narrative' Apollo Musagetes medallion-type.

The choice of Hercules as the figure for a reverse-type would appear in keeping with established Roman tradition,²⁷ yet one has

²⁷ Numismatic depictions of Hercules during the early Imperial period included the 'restoration' of a Republican denarius by Trajan, representations of cult-statues of the divine Hercules, and the 'Hercules of Gades' aureus-types of Hadrian. See *BMCRE* III, p.54, and *Hadrian* Numbers 9 and 98. The subject of Hercules' encounter with the Hesperides is known, for example, from Romano-Campanian wall-paintings. See Dawson 1944, p.89 ,99 and Plate VI.

only to compare the artistic features in general and the narrative qualities in particular of the 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' medallion-type with, for example, 'Hercules of Gades' aureus-types²⁸ to realize that a significant artistic development has occurred. Whereas the 'Hercules of Gades' coin-types depict, in a schematic manner, a cult-statue within a temple and the scene has no temporal reference, the 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' medallion-type displays naturalistic and organic figures in visually stimulating poses. Furthermore it illustrates a specific event which occurred in a particular time and place, identified as such from an external reference. That these examples of mythological depiction were issued during the period of Hadrian's third consulship, combined with the fact that there is a complete lack of artistic parallels for the noted features of the medallion-type in the coinage, are strong evidence for the view that medallion engravers, working within Greek artistic traditions, were commissioned to introduce, within a short space of time, a fully developed and mature narrative tradition to the medallions of Imperial Rome.

Further evidence for a strong Greek influence in the medallion striking which took place under Hadrian is the depiction of a myth clearly belonging to Greek traditions - the contest between Minerva and Neptune held to decide the domination of Attica²⁹ which was

²⁸ For example see BMCRE III, p.54, and Hadrian Numbers 9 and 98.

²⁹ For reference to this contest see, for example, Apollodorus, The Library III.xiv.1, and Ovid, Metamorphoses Book VI. 70 - 71.

shown on a reverse type which is known from several surviving pieces of bronze (Plate 5.2 - 3),³⁰ and one of silver (Plate 5.4).³¹ Surviving examples of bronze are very worn; however the silver piece is in a much finer condition. The design is visually stimulating and detailed, capturing the psychological tension of an interval in the competition. Toynbee describes the scene in graphic detail: "On the left stands Poseidon, facing towards the right, his left foot on a rock (from which water gushes?), his himation draped over his left knee, on which his elbow rests, and a trident in his right hand. Behind him is a rock, with a long-necked bird perched on it. In the centre is an olive-tree; and to the right of the tree Athene stands towards the left, her left hand on her hip, while she touches with her right hand the stem of the tree, against which she has leant her spear. Behind Athene is her shield, with a serpent rearing against it, and a second serpent is seen at the foot of the tree. Poseidon extends his left hand towards the goddess, as though engaging her in conversation, while Athene, serene and dignified, gazes quietly down. The rivals have shown their tokens and calmly await the issue"³²

³⁰ Gneecchi 1912, Tav. 146.8 - 9, p.20, Number 100. LIMC II, Minerva e Neptunus p.1098, n.345.

³¹ Mazzini 1957, Vol.II Number 475. The type was also copied under Antoninus Pius, and re-issued in the name of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar, see Chapter Four.A, p.76 and Plate 7.4.

³² Toynbee 1944, p.217.

It has been suggested by Imhoof-Blumer and Gardner,³³ Toynbee,³⁴ and Stevens³⁵ that this depiction may illustrate a sculptural group from the Athenian Acropolis mentioned by Pausanias.³⁶ It should be noted, however, that Pausanias' description is very vague and while the work is attributed by some to the tradition of Alkamenes, its date is open to debate.³⁷ It has been suggested by Toynbee that the medallion-type was directly copied from the Greek masterpiece, and the medallion-type can be compared with a Hellenistic cameo showing a similar composition and subject matter (Figure IV).³⁸ She poses the question: "Did it catch Hadrian's fancy, when he visited the Acropolis, as an interesting antiquarian discovery to be imitated on medallions? Hadrian's suite during the Greek tours may well have included court artists, who made sketches or models of Greek masterpieces for reproduction in the work of the medallic department of the Imperial mint."³⁹ Such an arrangement whereby court artists circulated with the emperor is possible, and indeed Seltman suggests that the

³³ Imhoof-Blumer and Gardner 1885, pp.130 - 131.

³⁴ Toynbee 1944, p.217.

³⁵ Stevens 1966, pp.111 - 118.

³⁶ Pausanias, *Attica* Book I.xxiv.3.

³⁷ Toynbee 1944, p.217.

³⁸ Babelon 1897, Plate 5.27.

³⁹ Toynbee 1944, p.217. Also see Toynbee 1950, p.392, and Toynbee 1944(b), pp.65f.

'Alpheios engraver' may have been sent to Olympia in order to copy statuary works there.⁴⁰ This speculative point serves to emphasize once more the apparent significance of Greek artistic traditions to the die-engravers employed at Rome during the Hadrianic period.

A most remarkable medallion-type,⁴¹ depicting scenes from the story of Aeneas, was issued with obverse types of Hadrian (Plate 6.1),⁴² and Antoninus Pius (Plate 10.1).⁴³ Celebrations of Rome's legendary past had occurred previously, notably with the 'She-wolf and Twins' coin-types of Republican and early Imperial issues (Plates 1.1, 1.5, 3.5 - 6, 4.2 - 5). Aeneas himself had also been depicted on coinage of the Republic and on a 'restoration' coin of Trajan (Plates 2.6 - 7, 3.10).⁴⁴ While the theme of the

⁴⁰ Seltman 1948, p.83.

⁴¹ The substance of the following discussion of this medallion-type has been published in *NC* 148 (1988), pp.148 - 152. See Appendix Two, The 'Aeneid' Medallion - a Narrative Interpretation, which reproduces this article.

⁴² Lewis 1925, Plate 21 Number 526.

⁴³ See Chapter Four.B.i, pp.108 - 110 and Plate 10.1. Pond Rothman 1978, pp.111 - 113, argues that the 'Aeneid' medallion-type (those issued with obverse types of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius), were both issued during the reign of the latter. Her argument that the 'Hadrianic' example was issued posthumously is based on iconographical interpretations, which, it will be argued, are incorrect. See below Note 56, and Appendix Two, The 'Aeneid' Medallion - a Narrative Interpretation. Kaiser-Raiss 1981, p.191 also argues against Pond Rothman's suggestion.

⁴⁴ Toynbee 1944, p.141, notes that on the medallion-type issued by Hadrian between A.D. 130 - 138, Venus is shown holding a shield adorned with a scene of Aeneas' flight from Troy.

medallion-type was not new, the manner in which the die-cutter chose to depict the legendary events is both unique and masterful.

The die-engraver has chosen to focus upon three important events of the story of Aeneas and arranged his plan accordingly into three distinct and separate zones or registers. Such a complex arrangement is virtually unknown in Imperial minting, and is extremely rare in other artistic media employed by the Romans.⁴⁵ The medallion-type shows four main elements in its upper zone. This register is divided off from the rest of the design by a solid ground-line. To the extreme left is a circular temple crowned by a conical roof. To the right of the temple stands a circular altar composed of three drum-like sections and topped by a circular object, perhaps representing an offering utensil. In the centre of this zone the figure of Aeneas is shown, bearing on his shoulders his father, Anchises. Aeneas' right leg bears the weight of his burden while the left is extended. Their position within the field, at the centre of the upper range, attracts attention to them and highlights their importance within the design. In the extreme right of this upper zone a tree is shown. Its slender trunk branches at its upper limits into many twigs while its base is hidden from view behind an architectural feature, possibly representing a low protective wall or enclosure.

⁴⁵ One notable surviving exception is a tomb painting from the Esquiline depicting three successive scenes, possibly showing negotiations between the Romans and the Samnites. Bandinelli 1969, Plate 117. See also Brilliant 1984, pp.90f.

A beautifully engraved sow occupies the central zone of the flan. Unmistakably she is the sow prophesied by Helenus, as recorded in the *Aeneid*⁴⁶ and celebrated on Hadrianic medallions (Plate 6.2).⁴⁷ The sow and her litter stand on a ground-line similar to that of the upper zone. The piglets are schematically represented and are not distinctive. A dozen or so of the young are depicted since to show all thirty was unnecessary and artistically undesirable. The meaning of the group is quite clear and yet the scene does not appear overcrowded. The sow herself faces right. Her long snout, huge head and body are engraved in high relief and thus appear well rounded, while the muscling of her hind quarters and face are highlighted by the fall of light and shadow across the medallion-flan.

The lowest zone of the medallion is occupied by a fortified wall which stretches along the lowest edge of the flan and follows its curved edge from left and right. While this feature is iconographically distinct from the central and upper zones, the wall and towers rise to the height of the ground-line of the upper zone and so serve to enhance the compositional unity of the design. The central section of the wall, in the lowest portion of the flan, is broken by an arched gateway. Engraved lines in the facing wall indicate the blocks used in its construction. On either side of the gateway the wall runs almost parallel to the ground-lines of the zones

⁴⁶ Vergil, *Aeneid* Book III.389 - 393.

⁴⁷ Toynbee 1944, p.143, and Gnechi 1912, Tav. 159.4 and .6.

above before rising at forty-five degrees to follow the sweep of the flank. The corners of the wall are indicated by small buttresses. The side walls end in tall towers crowned by battlements. Behind each tower a second is shown, smaller than the first and higher in the field, indicating that they are some distance behind the first set.

The die-engraver of the medallion has employed, in part, a 'bird's-eye-view' perspective. That is to say, while the figures and various architectural elements which constitute the two upper zones are shown in linear perspective, the walls are shown from an elevated view point. This device of combining perspectives was employed by many Roman artists working in various media. Perhaps the most striking use of this combination of perspectives can be observed on the Column of Trajan. In scene LIII of the column, for example, the sacrificial procession in front of the walled enclosure is depicted in linear perspective, as are the emperor and the officials witnessing the offering inside the enclosure.⁴⁸ The walls of the enclosure, however, are shown from an elevated or 'bird's-eye-view' perspective so that one can see the action taking place within the enclosure. 'Bird's-eye-view' perspective has, in this example, been used to show a complex scene, elements of which would have been obscured from view if linear perspective had been employed. In the case of this Hadrianic medallion, 'bird's-eye-view' perspective has not been employed to show what lies behind the wall,

⁴⁸ Gauer 1977, Tafel 7.b.

for neither the sow nor Aeneas with Anchises is to be interpreted as being 'within' the walls. Rather the artist has employed this perspective in order to depict fully the walls themselves and their battlements. The Claudian **IMPER RECEPT** series depicting the walls of the Praetorian camp well illustrate the artistic problems associated with depicting walls in linear perspective (**Figure V**).⁴⁹ In coins of this series the wall of the camp appears as an oblong shape covered in squares representing stone blocks and broken by two arches. Architectural features such as arches and towers behind the wall have been elevated into view by the die-engravers. The resulting design totally lacks visual credence and artistic merit. To avoid the limitations of linear perspective in adequately representing a complex architectural structure within the confines of the flan, the Hadrianic engraver of this medallion has depicted the walls using 'bird's-eye-view' perspective. This has enabled him to show not only the main wall and its arched entrance way, but also the flanking walls and the battlement towers in a visually convincing manner. That he should wish to depict the walls in such detail and clarity argues that they must be seen as a significant and integral element of the whole design.

Past interpretations of the design have not recognized its true significance and its unique place in the history of Roman numismatic narrative art. Grant, for example, describes this design, issued with

⁴⁹ Breglia 1968, p.14.

the obverse of Antoninus Pius as "the walls of Lavinium; with a statue of its founder Aeneas carrying his father. The sow and young are also to be seen."⁵⁰ Similarly Toynbee explains that it shows "the sow and her piglets within a walled enclosure, with Aeneas carrying Anchises above."⁵¹ Mattingly describes the Antonine copy of the Hadrianic medallion as showing "the great Sow standing before the new Troy in Italy, while, in the background, Aeneas carries Anchises between a temple and an altar."⁵² While these writers have noted the major elements of the design, they have not recognized its narrative features.

Hannestad's Roman Art and Imperial Policy discusses this reverse type (issued with the obverse type of Antoninus Pius), refuting traditional interpretations of the design.⁵³ However, from a narrative point of view, Hannestad's discussion does not observe accurately the die-engraver's narrative technique. Hannestad writes: "On the reverse of the medallion ... are reproduced the essential parts of the Aeneas myth in the synchronic form which often characterized Roman narrative presentations. Above, Aeneas with his father Anchises on his back has left ravished Troy and is entering the world of his future and the Romans' past. Although Anchises was

⁵⁰ Grant 1971, note to Figure 7.

⁵¹ Toynbee 1942, p.44.

⁵² BMCRE IV, p.xciv. Also see Banti 1984, p.329.

⁵³ Hannestad 1986, p.212.

long dead when his son reached Latium's coast, many elements all referring to this landscape are depicted. On the right an oak-tree, as on the Ara Pacis relief ... places the action in a rural setting. On the left the upper register is completed with a little round temple. This is presumably the Vesta temple in which the Palladium, which Aeneas has rescued from burning Troy, was kept Aeneas is approaching an altar on which he will in a moment sacrifice the white sow to Juno. The sow with its thirty piglets is shown beneath. At the place where he met it he should, according to the prophecy of the priest of Apollo, build Lavinium, whose walls have already risen to complete the design."⁵⁴

Hannestad's interpretation of the design is based on the assumption that the medallion-engraver has 'simultaneously' depicted Aeneas involved in two temporally and spatially distinct actions -

⁵⁴ Hannestad 1986, p.212. Hannestad follows the tradition that Aeneas founded Lavinium on the site where he discovered the Great Sow. While the prophecy of Helenus recounted in Book III of the *Aeneid* would suggest this course of events, Vergil's narrative places the founding of the military camp which was to be the site of the city before the discovery of the sow, (Book VII line 116f., and Book VIII line 80f. respectively). The prophecy of Tiberinus is that Ascanius will found the city of Alba Longa on the site of the sow's discovery, thirty years after the event, (Book VIII line 47f.). It is this tradition, which appears to follow most closely the overall narrative of Vergil, that has been adopted by this writer. It should be noted, however, that Ionnes Tzetzes, the twelfth century commentator on Lycophron's *Alexandra*, citing Cassius Dio Cocceianus' *Roman History*, records that the sow leapt from Aeneas' ship when he landed near Laurentium, was sacrificed, and Aeneas built his city on the spot. (See Dio Cassius, translated Cary (1970), p.xxv and p.5). If one assumes that Tzetzes accurately followed Dio, and that Dio was recounting a version of the story circulating in the early second century, it might be argued that at least two versions of the events concerning the founding of Lavinium were known to the die-engravers of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. Indeed Livy recounts that two versions of Aeneas' early relationship with Latinus were known in the late first century BC (see Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* Book I.i).

the bearing of Anchises, and the sacrifice of the Great Sow.⁵⁵ Given that these two actions were so vastly separated in time and place it would seem most unlikely that the die-engraver intended the viewer to so interpret the design. Furthermore it is visually incredible that Aeneas, who is shown on a much smaller scale than the sow, could hope to perform a sacrifice with the beast. The die-engraver's use of different scales and registers, which serve to divide these two elements of the composition, strongly suggests that they were not intended to be seen as 'simultaneous' events. In all Hannestad describes the type as alluding to five episodes of the Aeneas story: Aeneas and Anchises leaving Troy, the landing in Latium, the placing of the Palladium in the Temple of Vesta, the sacrifice to Juno, and the building of Lavinium. This argument fails to recognize the most significant feature of the medallion's composition - its use of three separate registers which serve to divide the flan into quite distinct zones. That the 'Aeneid' medallion-type was the only example in the history of Roman Imperial minting to adopt such a system of registers is, in itself, evidence that the engraver intended the three elements of the design to be seen as being 'distinct'. If the temporal and spatial unity of each register is assumed, the upper zone's illustrative relationship to the literary description of the meeting place of Aeneas and his family outside Troy becomes apparent.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Hannestad 1986, p.212, appears to argue that although Aeneas is depicted bearing the 'long dead' Anchises, he will 'in a moment' sacrifice the Great Sow.

⁵⁶ Pond Rothman 1978, pp.111 - 113, suggests that the Hadrianic 'Aeneid' medallion-type forms part of a posthumous Hadrianic series, issued by Antoninus
(Continued. ...)

Far from representing a statue of its founder among the buildings of Lavinium or a simultaneous depiction of Aeneas engaged in two actions, the features of the upper zone of the medallion illustrate a most significant event in Aeneas' flight from Troy;

est urbe egressis tumulus templumque vetustum
desertae Cereris, iuxtaque antiqua cupressus
religione patrum multos servata per annos;
hanc ex diverso sedem veniemus in unam.

Aeneid Book II. 713 - 716

Pius. She bases her opinion on iconographical grounds, stating "... the image presents a synopsis of Aeneas's arrival in Italy and his foundation of a new state. There is, however, a strikingly inaccurate detail in this image: Aeneas carries his aged father, even though Anchises had entered Elysium long before Aeneas arrived in Italy. There is no apparent reason for Hadrian to conflate the legend of the founding of Rome with the theme of his escape from Troy. But Antoninus benefits from the alteration of the story. Introduction of the motif of Aeneas carrying Anchises implies that Antoninus's filial devotion parallels Aeneas's regard for his father." Pond Rothman notes that Beaujeu 1955, suggests that "... the Aeneas-Anchises motif was used because it was the most familiar characterization of Aeneas." Pond Rothman's interpretation of the iconography of the design, (and hence her assignment of it to a posthumous 'Hadrianic' medallion series), is based on the premise that the upper zone of the flan depicts Aeneas' arrival in Italy. The argument proposed in this thesis, that the upper zone depicts Aeneas and Anchises escaping Troy in accordance with Vergil's narrative, is clearly irreconcilable with such a view, and would call into question her suggestion that the 'Hadrianic' piece was issued under Antoninus Pius. If the die-engraver's intent had been to show the arrival of Aeneas in Italy, would he have chosen to present the viewer with an incongruous 'Aeneas-Anchises' motif simply to identify the figure of Aeneas? Why not depict Aeneas and Ascanius, with accompanying attributes such as Ascanius' Phrygian cap and pedum - points of iconography which would serve to identify the figures?

This passage of Vergil's Aeneid explains fully the upper zone of the medallion; the Temple of Ceres, shown with an altar before it, and the old cypress enclosed in its protective wall frame the figure of Aeneas carrying Anchises who arrive at the appointed place.⁵⁷ The strong similarities between the scene depicted on the upper register of the medallion and the lines from Vergil suggest that the register is, in fact, an illustration of this specific passage of the Aeneid. The Great Sow, depicted on the central register of the medallion, is also described in the Aeneid when Helenus makes the prophesy;

cum tibi sollicito secreti ad fluminis undam
litoreis ingens inventa sub ilicibus sus
triginta capitum fetus enixa iacebit,
alba, solo recubans, albi circum ubera nati,
is locus urbis erit, requies ea certa laborum.

Book III. 389 - 393

The walls shown on the medallion may be those of the city of Alba Longa alluded to in the lines above, or those of Lavinium, the town whose founding by Aeneas is foretold in the Aeneid;

⁵⁷ Parallels exist between the 'Aeneid' medallion-type and a design carried on a Roman lamp (Galinsky 1969, Figure 5; see Figure VI). Like the medallion, the lamp shows a circular temple to the left, and a tree (highly stylized in the case of the lamp design). Aeneas is depicted carrying Anchises, but the figure of Ascanius, missing on the medallion-type, is shown on the lamp. In his discussion of the lamp Galinsky 1969, p.8, suggests that "It is very likely that the representation and inscription [AENEAS ANCHISES ASCANIUS REX PIE] on this small artifact were ultimately inspired by the Aeneid."

ipse humili designat moenia fossa
 moliturque locum primasque in litore sedes
 castrorum in morem pinnis atque aggere cingit.

Book VII. 157 - 159

It can be argued that the entire medallion-type was not only directly inspired by the Aeneid, but that it is illustrative of the text itself. This piece might therefore be called the 'Aeneid' medallion-type.

The three zones of the medallion-flan represent key events in the Aeneas legend: his flight from Troy at the time of its sacking, his arrival in Latium and the sacrificing of the sow and her piglets, and Aeneas' founding of the town of Lavinium or Ascanius' founding of Alba Longa. The events are separated in time and space. Nevertheless each scene is clearly related to the others and the sequence of events is observed by reading from the upper zone downwards. As mentioned the use of registers was uncommon in Roman art. Notable exceptions are the so-called 'Tabulae Iliacae'.⁵⁸ Two of the 'Tabulae Iliacae', the 'Tabula Odyssea'⁵⁹ and the 'Tabula Iliaca Capitolina' (Figure VII),⁶⁰ provide useful points of

⁵⁸ See Sadurska 1964.

⁵⁹ Sadurska 1964, Planche XII.III.

⁶⁰ Sadurska 1964, Planche I.IA.

comparison with the 'Aeneid' medallion-type of Hadrian. In their use of registers the artists of these two tablets have employed different techniques in arranging the episodes depicted.⁶¹ In the 'Tabula Odyssea' the house of Circe provides a unified setting in which three successive episodes are shown. In the lower left hand side of the panel Odysseus is given the magic herbs by Hermes outside the walls of the dwelling. In the next scene, shown in the middle right hand side of the panel, Odysseus threatens Circe in a walled court, and finally in the upper section of the panel Circe is forced to free Odysseus' followers in an open courtyard. Each of these scenes is separated from the rest by the architectural features of Circe's house, and each group stands on its own ground-line. In contrast the sculptor of the central section of the 'Tabula Iliaca Capitolina' has arranged his work in successive horizontal registers similar to those employed by the engraver of the 'Aeneid' medallion-type. Within the walls of Troy, for example, three distinct registers are shown. In the upper zone the wooden horse is depicted and the Greeks begin their slaughter of the Trojans. In the middle zone the slaughter of the royal family is shown and below, in a third register, Aeneas and his family flee the city while the battle rages within the walls. Each of these registers is distinct, separated from one another by architectural features and, in the case of the upper register, by a

⁶¹ The direction in which one reads the 'Tabula Iliaca Capitolina', from top to bottom, is the same as that for the 'Aeneid' medallion-type. It should be noted, however, that this arrangement was by no means the only convention employed by the sculptors of the few surviving examples of Roman art in which registers are used. In the 'Tabula Odyssea', for example, one reads from the bottom scene, in an anti-clockwise direction, to the top.

ground-line; however each scene is shown to occur within the walls of the city. While the arrangement of this section of the 'Tabula Iliaca Capitolina' and the perspective which is used to show walls and the action within are features it holds in common with the 'Aeneid' medallion-type, it must be stressed that the tablet, as an artistic whole, is an example of the cyclic method of narrative depiction. The panel contains several other registers and the figures of Aeneas and his family are repeated, for example, in the lower right of the panel as they depart the shores of Troy. The 'Aeneid' medallion-type does not repeat any of the participants of the story and the scenes it alludes to are temporally and spatially separated.

The various scenes which make up the medallion's composition do not show violent action, rather they are visual cues to stir the viewer's memory of the actions and events surrounding each scene. The design is a celebration of a vital sequence of events which led to the founding of the city of Rome itself and it is the culmination of those events, greater in importance than any particular single action, which was stressed by the artist. The monoscenic or 'isolating' method of narrative depiction which focuses on a single event is inadequate to suggest a temporal progression of events and has thus been abandoned. Faced with the desire to show this progression of events, and given the limitations of scale presented by his medium, the medallion-engraver has chosen to allude to the major events and to arrange them in separate zones to suggest a temporal sequence as one reads from the top of the flan to the bottom. He relies on the viewer's knowledge of the significance of each of these specific

scenes to mentally 'fill in the gaps' in the storyline, to recall the major events which were to lead to the founding of Rome.

How might the narrative technique adopted by the die-engraver of the 'Aeneid' medallion be classified? Clearly it cannot be seen as an example of the 'isolating' or monoscenic mode of narrative, based on the principle of the unity of time and place.⁶² In his description of the 'complementary method' Wickhoff states that, "... without repetition of the *dramatis personae*, it aims at the complete expression of everything that happened before or after the central event, or that concerns the subject matter."⁶³ Wickhoff's definition of this mode of narrative depiction is based upon the assumption that subsidiary scenes are grouped around a central event which forms the focus of the depiction. The register of the Francois Vase representing the death of Troilus is used by Wickhoff to demonstrate the method as he describes it. He states, in the case of this example, that "... in order to bring out the totality of the event in question we are shown its preparatory stages as if by a retrogression from the main part."⁶⁴ In the case of the Hadrianic medallion in question no such central event exists. The flight from Troy, the arrival in Latium, and the founding of Lavinium or Alba Longa are shown as subsequent, but equally important episodes in the legend. Thus the

⁶² See Wickhoff 1900, p.13, and Weitzmann 1970, pp.14 - 17.

⁶³ Wickhoff 1900, p.13. Also see Meyboom 1978, pp.70 - 71.

⁶⁴ Wickhoff 1900, p.13.

term 'complementary' does not accurately describe the narrative mode used by the medallion-engraver of this type.

Wickhoff describes the 'continuous method' of narrative depiction, characterized by an uninterrupted sequence of scenes, linked by a common background, in which the central figure is repeated.⁶⁵ While the Hadrianic medallion in question does indeed show a sequence of scenes, and the walls of the city depicted do follow the sweep of the flan and so compositionally link the scenes, they are clearly not uninterrupted, for the arrangement of the registers clearly defines the iconographic units, and there is no repetition of figures.

Weitzmann identifies a mode of narrative which he calls 'simultaneous': "Within the limits of a single scene actions take place at the same time, ie. simultaneously. Thus we might speak of a simultaneous method."⁶⁶ This method of narrative art involves the depiction of various moments of a tale or story as one single scene without repeating any of its participants, thereby transgressing the limitations of the unity of time. From Hannestad's description of the medallion-type, which he classifies as 'synchronic',⁶⁷ it appears that

⁶⁵ Wickhoff 1900, p.13, pp.111 - 114. Also see Meyboom 1978, pp.71 - 72.

⁶⁶ Weitzmann 1970, p.17.

⁶⁷ Hannestad 1986, p.212. Snodgrass 1982, uses the term 'synoptic' to describe this narrative mode. For discussion of Snodgrass' terminology, see Chapter One, Note 47. For discussion of the differences between the so-called 'complementary' and 'simultaneous' modes, see Weitzmann 1970, pp.33 - 34, and Meyboom 1978, p.71.

his terminology is synonymous with Weitzmann's 'simultaneous' mode. However the medallion depicts but one scene of action, Aeneas bearing Anchises, and it cannot be considered to show a single scene for within the single frame of the medallion field three separate registers clearly divide the flan into three distinct scenes.

Weitzmann uses the term 'cyclic' to describe narrative depictions in which a series of consecutive scenes of separate and centered action are depicted with the central participants being repeated in each scene, and thus observing the rules of the unity of time and place.⁶⁸ He also points out that such depictions must have iconographic coherence and dependence upon a textual source. While this Hadrianic medallion has been argued to depend upon a single textual source, the Aeneid, and consecutive scenes from the story are depicted, the scenes shown do not constitute centered action nor is there any repetition of the central participant. While it might be argued that the 'Aeneid' medallion-type could be considered a form of cyclic depiction, and thus be described as 'proto-cyclic', it does not constitute true cyclic narrative as defined by Weitzmann.

The fact that none of the terms used by modern writers to categorize the modes of narrative depiction adequately describes the 'Aeneid' medallion-type highlights its unique place in Roman art. The 'Aeneid' medallion-type depicts three successive episodes:

⁶⁸ Weitzmann 1970, p.17. For further discussion of the cyclic method and its use on coins and medallions, see Appendix Four, Cyclic Narrative and Numismatic Art.

Aeneas and Anchises fleeing Troy, the Great Sow, and the walls of Lavinium or Alba Longa, episodes which are widely separated in time, and there is a spatial shift from Troy to Latium. Within the limits of the medallion-flan the engraver has alluded to three of the significant events which led to the founding of Rome as told in the Aeneid. It is the culmination of those events, greater in significance than any particular single action, which was stressed by the die-artist. The engraver has provided the visual clues but relies on the viewer's knowledge of the text to interpret and link these scenes which are widely distanced in time and place. In this linking process the viewer's mind recalls the broad sweep of the epic's narrative.

Goethe perhaps came closest to describing the spirit of the design when he wrote, "The ancients saw a picture as an enclosed and separate whole; they wanted to show everything within the given space; one was not to think something about the picture, one was to think the picture and see everything in it. By putting together the various stages of the poem and of the tradition, they set the sequence before our eyes; for our bodily eyes are to see the picture and enjoy it."⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Extract from a letter by Goethe to Meyer, translated by Snodgrass 1982, pp.3 - 4.

SUMMARY

Under Hadrian the artistic potential of the bronze medallion-flan was first explored. Several scenes of typical mythological action carried on Hadrianic medallions, such as Pan at rest (Plate 4.6 (a - b)) and Apollo Musagetes playing for the Muses (Plate 4.7), reflect a new interest in depicting temporal and spatial setting, and representing human figures in a visually credible manner. Points such as the choice of subject matter, Hadrian's philhellenic interests, evidence for the existence of the so-called 'Alpheios engraver', and the possibility of Greek artistic prototypes for some designs all suggest a strong Greek influence at that section of the Hadrianic Mint of Rome responsible for the cutting of medallion-dies.

The Hadrianic period also witnessed the creation of the first innovative mythological narrative designs to be issued during the Imperial period. Significantly they were carried on medallions, pieces whose very purpose allowed for greater artistic freedom and experimentation than the flans of the 'everyday' coinage. In regard to their innovative narrative designs and artistic features, Hadrianic mythological medallion-types provide evidence for the introduction of a fully matured Greek tradition to Roman medallic production. Imperial mythological narrative art on numismatic objects created at the Mint of Rome would appear to owe their origins not to the tradition of narrative art which was created at Rome during the Republican era and abandoned during the early Imperial period, but

rather to the introduction of Greek traditions and artistic methods made at the instigation of Hadrian or his officials.

The reign of Hadrian saw the issuing of two narrative mythological designs of the monoscenic mode on medallion-flans, the 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' (Plate 5.1) and 'Minerva and Neptune Contesting the Domination of Attica' (Plate 5.2 - 4). It is also likely that it witnessed the striking of the exceptional 'Aeneid' medallion-type (Plate 6.1). The die-engraver of this type was the first to abandon the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction and, transgressing the principles of spatial and temporal unity, portrayed three successive stages of Vergil's epic Aeneid. A copy of this type made under Antoninus Pius (Plate 10.1), and one other medallion-type of that emperor's reign (Plate 10.6 (a) - (b)) are the only examples of mythological numismatic types issued by the Mint of Rome to deviate from the monoscenic mode of narrative art, a factor which reflects the coin- and medallion-flans' limitations in regards to carrying complex mythological designs, and which also serves to highlight the degree of experimentation allowed to the medallion die-engravers during this period.

Hadrianic interest in depicting scenes of specific legendary and mythological action illustrative of external references was to influence greatly the die-engravers of Hadrian's Imperial successor, Antoninus Pius. The latter's reign was, both in terms of the number of designs created and their artistic qualities, the most significant

period in the production of mythological narrative types by the Mint of Rome.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANTONINUS PIUS

A) 'NON-PROGRAMME SERIES' MYTHOLOGICAL NUMISMATIC DEPICTION, A.D.139 TO 161

B) THE 'PROGRAMME SERIES' OF ANTONINUS PIUS

I - THE 'AENEID' MEDALLION-TYPE RE-ISSUED

II - THE MAIN BODY OF THE 'PROGRAMME SERIES',
A.D. 140 TO 145

III - MEDALLIONS OF THE 'PROGRAMME SERIES'
STRUCK POSTHUMOUSLY FOR FAUSTINA THE ELDER

IV - MEDALLIONS OF THE 'PROGRAMME SERIES'
STRUCK BY ANTONINUS PIUS DURING THE
PERIOD OF HIS FOURTH CONSULSHIP

V - MEDALLIONS OF THE 'PROGRAMME SERIES'
STRUCK IN THE NAME OF MARCUS AURELIUS
AS CAESAR

VI - FURTHER MEDALLIONS OF THE 'PROGRAMME
SERIES'?

VII - A NARRATIVE OVERVIEW OF THE 'PROGRAMME
SERIES'

For the purposes of this thesis mythological numismatic depictions issued during the reign of Antoninus Pius have been divided into two simple categories; those numismatic pieces minted at Rome during his principate which are not considered to belong to the so-called 'programme series', and those coin- and medallion-types considered to form part of, or be closely related to, the 'programme series'. While this categorization is not chronological, for the 'programme series' belongs almost exclusively to the period between A.D. 140 and 145, artistically the mythological pieces surviving from the period of Antoninus Pius' fourth consulship which are not considered to belong to the so-called 'programme series' closely parallel, and in some cases copy, types issued in the earlier period of his reign. In regard to their subject matter and artistic features many of the 'non-programme series' types will be seen to reflect strong links with the Hadrianic period. Thematically the coin- and medallion-types of the 'programme series' will be demonstrated to form a unified group, based on celebrations of mythological and heroic events directly related to Rome's legendary past.

A) 'NON-PROGRAMME SERIES' MYTHOLOGICAL NUMISMATIC DEPICTIONS, A.D. 139 TO 161.

Many of the medallions and coins issued during the period A.D.139 to 161 reflect strong thematic and artistic links with pieces struck under Hadrian. Many of the subjects dealt with by the coin- and medallion-engravers of Hadrian's reign were

continued, and in some cases directly copied, by Antoninus Pius' die-artists. Evidence suggests that a number of 'Hadrianic' medallions were re-issued, or issued posthumously by Antoninus Pius " ... to declare the emperor's pious regard for the memory of his predecessor, his intent to continue Hadrian's political and cultural policies, and his role as the crucial link in the chain of dynastic continuity from Hadrian through the young Marcus Aurelius."¹

The traditional 'She-wolf and Twins' motif continued to be used during Antoninus' reign. The 'She-wolf and Twins' types of Antoninus Pius were concentrated in issues struck during the period of his third consulship and were displayed on the reverses of many denarii (**Plate 6.3**),² sestertii (**Plate 6.4**)³ and asses (**Plate 6.5**).⁴ While the simple motif of the twins suckling from the wolf, and types showing a boat in the exergue are known from Flavian times⁵ and were simply copied on many of Antoninus Pius' coins, some types depict a wide, semi-circular line traversing the upper region of the field above the she-wolf's

¹ Pond Rothman 1978, p.108. Kaiser-Raiss 1981, p.194 suggests "Antoninus decided to follow [Hadrian's] model, and continued to issue medallions, many struck from Hadrianic dies which had been preserved...." See Appendix One, Some Posthumous Hadrianic Medallions. See also Hill 1970, pp.79f.

² BMCRE IV, Antoninus Pius Numbers 232, 240 - 244. Mazzini 1957, Number 915.

³ Cohen 1880, Antonin 631, 633 - 34, 772, 768. BMCRE IV, Antoninus Pius Numbers 1299, 1300, 1318 - 1321. RIC III, Numbers 630 - 32, 648 - 49. Banti 1984, Numbers 85, 379 - 84, 439 - 43, p.258.

⁴ Mazzini 1957, Number 448.

⁵ For discussion of the narrative significance of this feature, see Chapter Two, pp.28 - 29, and **Plate 3.5 - 6**.

head, a schematic representation of the grotto in which they were found (**Plate 6.3**). On one particularly striking example of this type an eagle, facing to the right, is shown perched on the top of the grotto (**Plate 6.6**).⁶ While the depiction of the she-wolf is much more naturalistic and organic on this type than those, say, of the Flavian era, the 'She-wolf and Twins' coin-types issued by Antoninus Pius are simply symbols of the 'Roma Renascens'⁷ he has established, their designs being devoid of any real action or meaningful temporal and spatial setting.⁸

An example of Antoninus Pius' engravers' use of themes and types drawn from Hadrianic types is provided by the Jupiter and Amalthea medallion- and as-types. Jupiter as a child being cared for by the goat Amalthea had appeared on a Hadrianic medallion (**Plate 4.1**).⁹ Under Antoninus Pius the same characters are depicted, but in different poses, on an as issued during the period of his fourth consulship (**Plate 6.7**),¹⁰ and on a medallion reverse which was combined with two different obverse types,

⁶ Cohen 1880, Antonin 771. BMCRE IV, Antoninus Pius Number 1300. RIC III, Number 632, and Banti 1984, Number 382.

⁷ BMCRE IV, p.lxxx.

⁸ The 'She-wolf and Twins' motif appears on a medallion issued between A.D. 140 and 143 (Gnecchi 1912, Tav.43.6). It shows Jupiter, with an eagle to the right and an altar to the left. The altar is shown to be decorated with a relief depicting the 'She-wolf and Twins' motif. Mattingly, BMCRE IV, p.xcv, has suggested that the design "... may perhaps represent Jupiter Latius as worshipped on the Alban Mount."

⁹ See Chapter Three.A, p.33.

¹⁰ Strack 1937, Teil III taf. IV.588a. BMCRE IV, p.331 Antoninus Pius Number 1979. LIMC I, Amaltheia p.583, n.15.

one issued in A.D. 139,¹¹ the other some time between A.D. 140 and 143 (**Plate 6.8**).¹² The as shows Jupiter riding atop the she-goat Amalthea. Jupiter is depicted facing to the front in a position which reflects the engraver's interest in portraying naturalistic and complex poses. His left leg is bent underneath him and rests on the goat's back. He supports himself with his left arm, while his right arm is extended towards the left of the field. His right leg is extended down the rump of the she-goat. On the medallion-type the figure of Jupiter is depicted in a side-saddle pose, with his left leg slightly bent and the knee touching the base of Amalthea's neck. The figure of Jupiter on the medallions appears comparatively smaller than that on the as-type, and may well represent him at a younger age. In order to avoid leaving the medallion-flan vacant and to increase visual interest, the medallion-engraver has used the area to the right to depict a low circular altar or cippus, decorated with a carved eagle. Above this architectural feature the branch of a tree reaches to the left and fills the upper region of the right-hand side of the flan. While the design is without temporal reference and the elements of landscape used on the medallion-type appear as a 'staged setting' rather than an indication of an actual or real place, the type does hold some narrative interest. The figures are

¹¹ Gneecchi 1912, Vol.II p.16, Number 60. Banti 1984, Number 525.

¹² Gneecchi 1912, Tav.50.4. Banti 1984, Number 536. LIMC I, Amaltheia p.583, n.16. Mattingly, BMCRE IV p.xcv, has suggested that this motif is "... normally a symbol of the Golden Age, often associated with the rise of a prince, who would here, of course, be Marcus."

recognizable individuals, their poses suggest movement and they are depicted in a naturalistic and organic manner.¹³

Hadrianic influence on the coin- and medallion-types issued by Antoninus Pius is also reflected by the re-issuing of non-narrative types depicting the Great Sow. The sow, which had been depicted on Hadrianic medallions (**Plate 6.2**)¹⁴, was celebrated on sestertii (**Plate 6.9 - 10**)¹⁵ and asses (**Plate 6.11**)¹⁶ issued by Antoninus Pius.

In some cases Antoninus Pius' engravers drew inspiration from characters or scenes depicted on Hadrianic medallion-types, but chose to change elements of the spatial setting of the scene or the poses of the figures and their actions. Illustrative of such adaptations to Hadrianic prototypes are medallions with designs based on the 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides', and 'Minerva and Neptune Contesting the Domination of Attica' medallion-types.¹⁷

¹³ Toynbee 1944, p.142, describes a medallion depicting the infant Jupiter riding a peacock between two dancing Curetes, the instructors of Jupiter on Crete. This medallion, like the 'Jupiter and Amalthea' types, refers to Jupiter's mythical upbringing, but is of limited narrative interest.

¹⁴ See Chapter Three.B, Note 47.

¹⁵ Cohen 1880, Antonin 775. RIC III, Number 629. BMCRE IV, Antoninus Pius Number 1298 and Plate 31 Number 6. Strack 1937, Teil III p.270, Number 942. Banti 1984, Number 385.

¹⁶ BMCRE IV, Antoninus Pius Number 1624. Cohen 1880, Vol. II Antonin Number 450.

¹⁷ For discussion of a Silvanus medallion-type, issued in the name of Hadrian, and an Apollo medallion-type, issued in the name of Antoninus Pius, which exhibit strong compositional similarities, see Appendix One, Some Posthumous Hadrianic Medallions.

The Hadrianic 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' type (**Plate 5.1**)¹⁸ would appear to have served as the prototype for a design, issued in conjunction with three obverse types which was changed by reversing the position of the figures (**Plate 7.1 - 3**).¹⁹ In these examples Hercules is shown standing to the right, separated from the Hesperides, who stand on the left, by the sacred tree guarded by Ladon. The composition is almost a mirror image of the Hadrianic type. The artist working under Antoninus Pius has, however, altered the poses of the characters. In doing so he has heightened the dramatic qualities of the scene and created a strong sense of temporal setting by giving the design an enhanced momentary quality. Hercules now holds the lion skin and club in his right hand and reaches to pluck an apple with his left. The Hesperides now seem to peer around the tree to watch, their coyness indicated by the fact that those to the rear hide behind the sister closest to the tree. From the narrative point of view this type is more successful than its Hadrianic prototype.

¹⁸ See Chapter Three.B, pp.45 - 47.

¹⁹ Cohen 1880, *Antonin* 1159. Gneecchi 1912, Tav.52.10. Banti 1984, Number 569. *LIMC* II, *Minerva e Neptunus* p. 1099, n.346; see **Plate 7.1**. Gneecchi 1912, Vol.II p.19 Number 87, records the obverse legend of this piece as **ANTONINUS AUG PIUS PP TR P COS IIII IMP II**. However a cast of the (same?) medallion in the British Museum, and a line- drawing of the type reproduced in Froehner 1878, p.55 bear the legend **ANTONINUS PIUS AUG PIUS PP TR P COS III IMP II**. For an example of the second type bearing this design and the obverse legend **ANTONINUS AUG PIUS PP TR P COS III**, see Cohen 1880, *Antonin* 1158, Gneecchi 1912, Tav.54.1. Banti 1984, Number 568; see **Plate 7.2**. The cast of a third medallion bearing this reverse-type combined with an obverse-type bearing the legend **ANTONINUS AUG PI US PP TR P XXIII** is held in the British Museum; see **Plate 7.3**. It would appear in these examples that the same reverse die was not simply re-struck with different obverse-types. Slight differences in detail between the reverses, such as the position of the Muses' arms and the angle at which Hercules' head is shown, indicate that while these pieces are very similar in composition and artistic quality, they are not identical.

Whereas the earlier example was static and lacked physical action, the design on the later medallions depicts the actual plucking of the sacred fruit, an action which is made all the more significant by the hesitant gazes of the Hesperides.

Two distinct medallion-types were issued during the period of Antoninus Pius' fourth consulship depicting scenes of the contest between Minerva and Neptune for the domination of Attica, and suggest strong artistic links with the Hadrianic period. One type, which was issued under the name of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar (**Plate 7.4**),²⁰ appears to be a direct copy of a Hadrianic medallion-type (**Plate 5.2 - 4**),²¹ while the other, a new type, was possibly inspired by the subject matter of the Hadrianic type (**Plate 7.5**).²² Both the copied Hadrianic type and new Antonine type depict the same contest between Minerva and Neptune and are examples of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction, for they both show recognizable individuals engaged in a specific event without transgressing the principles of the unity of time and

²⁰ Toynbee 1944, Plate XXIV.2.

²¹ See Chapter Three.B, pp.47 - 49.

²² Gnechi 1912, Tavv.51.1 and 52.5. Banti 1984, Number 540. The similarity in subject matter between this medallion and a marble relief from Aphrodisias has been noted by Toynbee 1942, p.42 and Plate IX.3; see **Figure VIII**. However, while both works depict Victory and the voting urn in the centre of the design, the relief shows Minerva and Neptune in poses very similar to those on the Hadrianic medallion-type (**Plate 5.2 - 4**) which was copied under Antoninus Pius and issued in the name of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar (**Plate 7.4**). While it is possible that several versions of the myth were represented in other art forms, and that the engraver of the new type (**Plate 7.5**) used one as his prototype, it is also possible, especially in view of the compositional changes made by the die-cutter of the Antonine version of the 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' medallion-types (compare **Plate 5.1** and **Plate 7.1 - 3**), that the die-engraver of the medallion in question initiated compositional alterations such as showing Neptune seated.

place. However the new Antonine medallion-type has an enhanced momentary quality as it shows Victory in the action of counting the cast votes. Whereas the Hadrianic medallion-engraver and his Antonine imitator chose to depict a quiet interlude between the actions involved in the event, the Antonine engraver of this new type chose to depict the 'moment of truth' as the winner is decided.

Minerva is shown to the left. She stands with her head slightly bent towards a table which, shown in very high relief, serves to divide the scene into two distinct parts. Neptune, on the right, likewise gazes towards the voting urn on the table. Their attitude helps to focus the viewer's attention on the actions of Victory who stands facing in the centre, her hand shown actually drawing out the votes from a large urn standing on a table, thus concentrating interest on the particular moment illustrated.

The figures of the god and goddess, shown to the sides of the table and dominating the design, are depicted in naturalistic poses. Minerva, with shield behind, stands with her left hand resting on a spear and her right hand on her hip. Her body appears slightly arched, as though she has jutted her hip out a little and rests her weight on the spear. Her body is covered by a tunic and peplum whose delicate folds are intricately engraved. The robust body of Neptune, naked to the waist, displays a well muscled torso and upper body. The pallium covering his lower body, shown to fall in heavy and deep folds, contrasts with the more delicate lines of the drapery worn by Minerva and Victory. The trident, held in the god's right hand, creates a diagonal line across the field which

contrasts with the vertical lines of an olive tree²³ depicted between Minerva and Victory, and with Minerva's spear. The organic manner in which the figures are represented, combined with the detailed depiction of their drapery, compositional balances and contrasts, and the enhanced momentary quality created by the poses of the figures are significant narrative features of this medallion-type.²⁴

²³ Toynbee 1942, p.42.

²⁴ Several examples of this reverse-type would appear to have been deliberately altered by re-tooling. It was noted by Cohen 1880, Antonin 1145, that such an example sharing an obverse-type of Antoninus Pius appeared to be 'very much retouched' (Cabinet des Médailles Number 114; see **Plate 7.6**). All attributes and points of iconography which make the design recognizable as a specific mythological event would appear to have been systematically erased. Gone are Victory, the olive tree and the shield. The voting urn appears to be replaced by a handled jug, and the spear and trident have been re-fashioned into staffs. Thus this type appears to represent a standing figure on the left and seated figure on the right, separated by a jug which rests on a table. Two further re-tooled examples of this type were issued in conjunction with obverse-types of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar. On one such example faint curved lines appear to the left of the standing figure and to the right of the jug (Cabinet des Médailles Number 179; see **Plate 7.7**, and Appendix One, Some Posthumous Hadrianic Medallions, **Figure C.iv** for the obverse-type). On the other example these lines are not shown, and the standing figure's right arm is shown straight and held by the side, with the raised left arm, relieved of its staff, being represented by a disproportionate limb (Gnecchi 1912, Vol.II, Tav.65.1; see **Plate 7.8**). The line-drawing of the reverse reproduced by Cohen 1880, Vol.III Marc Aurèle Number 1040 (see; **Plate 7.9**) is not, as Cohen suggests, the same as that represented by Gnecchi 1912, Tav.65.1 (**Plate 7.8**), but rather appears to be that here represented by **Plate 7.7**, and is incorrect in points of detail, such as the drapery shown on the seated figure. That the omission of the iconographical details on these variants was due to their being removed by re-tooling and not the product of differing dies is attested by two facts. Firstly, certain minor features would appear to have escaped the re-toolers' instruments. Under magnification the 'handle' of the jug on the example here represented by **Plate 7.6** can be seen to be the remains of the left arm of Victory, and the 'spout' her right elbow. Similarly on another piece, here represented by **Plate 7.8**, the remains of Victory's left arm can be distinguished, and no attempt has been made to join her upper arm with the vessel itself so as to give the appearance of a connected handle. Furthermore the faint curved lines behind the standing figure on this piece attest to the fact that Minerva's shield was once depicted there. Secondly the actual surface of the flans have definite signs of re-tooling. Vacant areas of these flans do not present the viewer with the usual fine finish of the mint workshop nor the pitted surface of a worn piece. Rather they appear covered with bumps and ridges - polished to a degree, but not flat. Areas of the flans obviously hard to reach with re-tooling instruments (such as between the bent arm of the standing figure)

(Continued. ...)

Of the medallions struck during Antoninus Pius' principate, several introduce Greek legends not depicted before on the medallions of imperial Rome. These pieces serve to illustrate Antoninus Pius' philhellenic spirit and continue the emphasis placed on the depictions of Greek mythological subject matter instituted under Hadrian. They also serve to demonstrate the continuation of a strong Greek tradition within the medallic section of the Imperial mint.

The earliest of this group, a medallion-type struck by Marcus Aurelius as Caesar in A.D. 140 (**Plate 7.10**),²⁵ and copied and re-issued on a medallion by Antoninus Pius at some time during the period of his fourth consulship (**Plate 7.11**),²⁶ shows Hercules fighting the centaur Nessus. The type is a fine example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction, its die-engraver clearly keenly interested in depicting violent action.

figure) appear higher than the general vacant background. It is possible that the noted re-tooling of these pieces may have been the work of ancient, not Renaissance or modern re-working. Toynbee 1944, p.57 notes examples of medallions found in the Monte della Giustizia in 1876 whose re-touched flans reveal that they were "tampered with, not by modern, but by ancient hands." If the pieces in question had been re-tooled in ancient times it was clearly not done 'officially' - the uneven finish of their flans and some carelessness in the re-working would suggest a 'private' cutter's work. Why a mythological type should be changed so as to render it a 'non-specific' depiction of two figures and a table bearing a jug remains unclear.

²⁵ Gnechi 1912, Tav.65.5. This subject matter was last celebrated on Roman coinage on a Republican triens struck between 217 and 215 B.C.; see **Plate 1.3**.

²⁶ Toynbee 1944, p.143, note 160, Plate XXV.3. Mazzini 1957, Antoninus Pius 1162. Banti 1984, Number 567.

The figure of the hero is shown in an energetic pose. His right leg is extended while his left is bent so that his knee is forced against the back of the struggling centaur. His torso is well muscled and robust, with his head slightly bent to the right. In his raised right hand, which is bent at the elbow, Hercules swings his club and is clearly about to despatch Nessus. The centaur is depicted rearing to the right. His forelegs and arms are out-flung, and his body arches under the weight of Hercules' left leg. The complex poses and naturalistic manner in which the figures are depicted make the design visually stimulating and credible.

The die-engraver also chose to indicate two elements of landscape. A large rock is shown between the centaur's hind legs and a tree, on which hangs the lion skin of Hercules,²⁷ is depicted in the left of the field. These objects serve to create a setting in which the actions of the figures take place.²⁸

At some time during the period of Antoninus Pius' fourth consulship a medallion-type was issued bearing an obverse-type of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar, and a reverse-type depicting

²⁷ Elmer 1933/34, p.146.

²⁸ The medallion noted by Gnechi 1912, Tav.54.4, and now held in the Cabinet des Médailles, Number 126, which depicts Theseus' battle with centaurs has been found by Toynbee 1944, p.142, note 159, to be a forgery. On p.231, note 4, Toynbee notes "... the style of the modelling and the complexity of the design, which are non-classical. The central group seems to have been copied from the Herkules and Nessos type of Antoninus Pius and of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar."

Hercules wrestling with Antaeus (**Plate 7.12**).²⁹ In terms of its subject matter (Hercules involved in combat) and its stylistic features, this reverse-type is very similar to 'Hercules and Nessus' type discussed above, suggesting that, if not created by the same die-artist, they were products of die-makers of the same artistic school.³⁰

²⁹ This type is known from one surviving medallion, Earl Fitzwilliam Collection 1949, Lot 354, Plate 18.354. The obverse carries the legend **AURELIUS CAESAR AUG. PII FIL.** It is suggested in the catalogue (p.33) that the piece may possibly be that described by Cohen 1880, Vol.III *Marcus Aurèle* 1045, "... where [the] description is incomplete." Cohen, however, records the obverse legend of the type he describes as **AURELIUS CAESAR AUG. PII F. COS.**, but does note, "Cette interprétation de Mionnet est difficile à compléter...." Also see Gnecci 1912, Vol.II, p.36, Number 75. The obverse of the type here represented by **Plate 7.12** resembles that of a medallion reproduced by Gnecci 1912, Tav.62.1.

³⁰ While the subject matter of the 'Hercules and Antaeus' type is otherwise unknown from flans of Rome, it does appear on drachmae issued c. A.D. 160 - 161 by the Mint of Alexandria as part of a 'Labours of Hercules Series' produced during the reign of Antoninus Pius (see Carlson 1972/3 p.63 and p.65, Plate D.2603V, and Milne 1943, Plate IV.8. Also see Appendix Four, *Numismatics and Cyclic Narrative*). In regard to the Alexandrian 'Labours of Hercules Series', Milne 1943, p.64, argues that "... this series is definitely Greek, of the Asiatic school, and comparison with the medallions struck approximately at the same time for the Koinon of the thirteen cities of Ionia suggests that the Alexandrian coins are due, if not to the same man, at any rate to a member of the same group." Furthermore, noting Toynbee's arguments for the production of a 'Programme Series' by the Mint of Rome under Antoninus Pius, Milne 1943, p.66, suggests the production of the 'Programme Series' "... seem[s] to indicate an attempt to revive the interest of the Romans in their archaeology and antiquities by representations of historical or mythological scenes or of objects of art. The officials in charge of the mint at Alexandria might be inspired to follow the lead of the capital in this respect, and to fall into line with what they understood to be the wishes of Emperor by adopting any mythological types that occurred to them without regard to their appropriateness to Egypt; so they imported a special artist to design the types in the first instance, though when the types were repeated the work was entrusted to men of the local school." It is possible that a Greek die-master or school of die-artists, perhaps brought to Rome during the reign of Hadrian (see Chapter Three.A), created designs such as the 'Hercules and Nessus' and 'Hercules and Antaeus' types under Antoninus Pius, and later found employment in Alexandria where the 'Labours of Hercules Series' was produced, and in Ionia. The Alexandrian 'series' also includes the subject of 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' which, while not showing the Hesperides, depicts Ladon in the tree, thus following the same version of the story as illustrated on medallions of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius (**Plates 5.1 and 7.1 - 3**), suggesting that artists following a similar tradition may have been responsible for the production of the types in both Rome and Alexandria.

Like the 'Hercules and Nessus' type, the 'Hercules and Antaeus' type shows the hero's lion-skin resting on a tree to the left.³¹ On the extreme right of the latter type appears a worn feature, possibly representing the head and torso of a human figure watching the struggle from behind a large rock, or an eagle resting atop a boulder(?). The centre of the flan is filled by the two combatants whose robust and well proportioned bodies dominate the design. Hercules stands facing on a groundline, his arms wrapped around the waist of the hapless Antaeus who appears to be attempting to break the hero's hold. Antaeus' huge chest, which is deeply muscled, seems expanded in response to the hold. His right leg is shown in low relief, thus appearing on a plane further away from the viewer than his left. This use of planes of relief to suggest spatial depth, combined with the position in which his legs and feet have been portrayed, create the illusion that his lower limbs are flung wildly in an attempt to throw the hero off balance.

The sense of violent physical action and reaction, of grip and struggle created by the die-maker of this design is, in the history of official numismatic production from Rome,³² only equalled by the 'Hercules and Nessus' type (**Plate 7.10 - 11**). The master die-cutter(s) of these types was the first and most successful to

³¹ Earl Fitzwilliam Collection 1949, p.33 indicates Hercules' bow and quiver are also shown on the left.

³² For discussion of contorniates bearing scenes of violent physical action, see Chapter Seven.

create narrative scenes depicting such violent physical action. Hercules is shown in the act of overcoming the foe, actually delivering the fatal blow, but unlike types which simply depict Hercules crowned by Victory or crowning himself and are symbolic of his success,³³ the 'Hercules and Nessus' and 'Hercules and Antaeus' types vividly confront the viewer with an insight into the physical strain and effort required by the hero to ensure his supremacy. The dramatic force of the designs, created by the powerful poses of the figures, engages the viewer and invites an emotional response to these scenes of monumental conflict, and as such are outstanding examples of the monoscenic method of narrative depiction.

In its depiction of violent action the Hercules medallion-types described above may be compared with one issued by Antoninus Pius in A.D. 157 celebrating Jupiter overcoming a giant (**Plate 7.13**).³⁴ The action depicted is specifically related to Jupiter's

³³ See below Note 69 and Chapter Five.A, pp.176 - 177, Five B, p.179, and **Plate 12.7 - 9**.

³⁴ Cohen 1880, Antonin 1004. Gnechi 1912, Tav.49.1, Banti 1984, Number 471, and LIMC IV, Gigantes p.247, n.543. As noted by Toynbee 1944, p.227, this medallion-type may be compared with a Hellenistic gem-design. See Furtwangler 1900, Tav.LVII.2; see **Figure IX**. A denarius-type, issued by Cn. Cornelius Sisena in Cisalpine Gaul(?) between 103 and 100 B.C., depicts the same subject matter, Jupiter riding in a quadriga, throwing a thunderbolt with his right hand and holding a sceptre in his left (CRR, Number 542. LIMC IV, Gigantes p.246, n.542; see **Plate 2.8**). Beneath the raised forelegs of the quadriga team lies an anguipedic giant, his limbs coiled to either side of his torso. In view of the fact that the figure of Jupiter depicted on the denarius-type is a recognizable individual, and that the action shown is specific, being known from external references, it might be considered narrative. However the primary aim of the type was clearly not to relate the action of Jupiter in a naturalistic manner. The figures are most schematically represented. The Republican die-engraver would appear intent not on relating a story, but on depicting a scene symbolic of Jupiter's power. In contrast this Imperial medallion-type while clearly conveying the same message, does so in a naturalistic and visually credible manner. Stevenson 1889, p.483, notes a
(Continued. ...

role in the Gigantomachy, a mythological battle recorded by such writers as Horace,³⁵ Apollodorus,³⁶ and Hesiod.³⁷ The type may be judged to constitute narrative art. The medallion-type is full of violent energy, recalling the words of Hesiod:

Οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτι Ζεὺς ἴσχευ ἐὼν μένος, ἀλλά νῦ τοῦ γε
εἶθαρ μὲν μένεος πλῆντο φρένες, ἐκ δέ τε πᾶσαν
φαῖνε βίην.

Theogony 687 - 689

On the medallion-type the figure of Jupiter is shown standing in a chariot drawn by four rearing horses, an anguipedic giant kneeling beneath their raised feet. Jupiter holds up a thunder-bolt in his right arm ready to smite his foe.

The illusion of spatial depth created by the die-engraver of this type is striking. The horse furthest from the viewer, rearing sky-ward, is shown in very low relief, that nearest is in high relief and well rounded, and those between on planes receding from the viewer. The effect of the employment of these various

medallion-type of Antoninus Pius which depicts Jupiter, Atlas and an altar on which stands an eagle. The altar is decorated by a panel relief showing Jupiter overcoming a fallen Titan. See Gneecchi 1912, Tav.49.2.

³⁵ Horace, Odes III.4.

³⁶ Apollodorus, The Library Book II.1.

³⁷ Hesiod, Theogony 686ff.

planes is to suggest that the giant lies beneath the legs of the central horses, and is surrounded and trapped by the flying hooves. Nevertheless, while fallen, the giant's serpentine legs rise defiantly as if to challenge the rearing forelegs of the horses, and its left arm is thrown out against their charge. Physical tension is thus suggested by the action and reaction of the giant and the horses, while Jupiter's raised weapon signals the mortal outcome of the conflict.

From the narrative point of view the type successfully illustrates, in a naturalistic manner, a specific and violent event. The poses of the various well proportioned and muscled figures draw the attention of the viewer. However, whereas the 'Hercules and Nessus' and 'Hercules and Antaeus' medallion-types are dominated by the violent actions of the hero and foe, here the action is centred on the figure of the giant and his defiant stance, and concentrated in the extreme left-hand side of the flan. The quality of violent action and re-action, while engaging and powerful, is thus somewhat diminished on this type because of its limitation to this area of the flan.

A medallion of A.D. 140 to 143 depicts, in the monoscenic mode of narrative, the scene of Hercules finding Telephus (**Plate 7.14**).³⁸ The surviving framed medallion depicting this scene reflects several significant narrative qualities: the medallion-engraver's desire to show the figure of Hercules in an organic and

³⁸ Gnechi 1912, Tav.53.2. Banti 1984, Number 573.

visually credible manner, his interest in creating a spatial setting, and the temporal quality of the work which captures the specific moment of Hercules recognizing his son.

When compared with the heroic deeds of Hercules the action depicted here is tranquil and domestic. Nevertheless it represents a significant point in the life of both Hercules and Telephus, and symbolises a continuity of heroic tradition. Hercules is depicted in a naturalistic manner, his pose suggesting that he is at rest after some great labour. He is shown standing to the left of the flan, facing right. The weight of his body rests on his club, which is held in his obscured left hand. His right leg is held straight to balance the body which leans to the left, while the left leg is slightly bent at the knee. His right hand is held behind his back. The figure is very robust, the right leg and arm, and torso appearing in very high relief, the left leg in low relief. The illusion of spatial depth thus created is further enhanced by the effect of cast shadow laying across the flan so that the well muscled body of the hero appears exceptionally naturalistic. Hercules' head is turned towards the infant Telephus who is shown suckling from a hind. The poses of the figures, the curved neck and head of the hind and Hercules' downward glance, focus the viewer's attention on the figure of Telephus and serve to heighten the temporal quality of the design, capturing as it does a specific and important legendary moment.

The naturalistic quality of the scene is further enhanced by the spatial setting created by the die-artist. Behind Hercules, in the left of the flan, the heavy stump of a tree rises, while beneath

Telephus and the hind a large mass of rocks and boulders fills the lower right of the portion of the flan. Above the hind, perched on a rock or limb, rests the figure of an eagle.

It is of interest to note that the specific scene depicted on this medallion is known from several surviving works of ancient art. It has been noted by Toynbee that the general scheme of the medallion-type is similar to a relief from the Telephos frieze of the Great Altar of Pergamon (**Figure X**),³⁹ but the frieze shows a lioness suckling the youth, and there are several points of discrepancy in detail between the medallion and the altar frieze.⁴⁰ The pose of Hercules on this medallion is most similar to that of the 'Farnese Hercules' type (**Figure XI**)⁴¹ and is paralleled in this respect by a painted depiction of Hercules and Telephus from the Basilica of Herculaneum (**Figure XII**).⁴² In this painted example, however, the hero is shown from a different point of view. The similarities in Hercules' pose suggest that this element of the medallion-design may have been borrowed or copied from other artistic sources. Vermeule suggests the immediate prototype of the medallion may have been a painted interpretation of Pergamene sculptural types.⁴³ If a relationship is assumed

³⁹ Toynbee 1944, p.218. Schmidt 1965, Plate 63 I am most grateful for the authorities at the Pergamon Museum, Berlin for arranging special access to the Telephos Frieze during my visit in December, 1988.

⁴⁰ Vermeule 1957, p.296.

⁴¹ Johnson 1968, Plate 37.

⁴² Grant 1971(b), p.154.

⁴³ Vermeule 1957, p.296.

between the medallion-type and surviving works in other artistic media it would appear that the die-engraver has successfully adapted features of the figure's pose and combined his representation of Hercules with other compositional features such as the figure of Telephus, the hind, and a gnarled tree shown to the left of the field, to create an engaging narrative depiction of a tranquil scene possessing an enhanced momentary quality.⁴⁴

A further Greek myth, the creation of man by Prometheus and Minerva, was introduced to the medallions of Rome during the period of Antoninus Pius' third consulship (**Plate 8.2**).⁴⁵ According to the Apollodoran tradition,⁴⁶ followed by writers

⁴⁴ The subject of Hercules finding Telephus is also depicted on the reverse of a medallion currently housed at the Cabinet des Médailles, (Number 117); **Plate 8.1**. It was combined with an obverse-type bearing the legend **ANTONINUS AUG PI US PP TR P COS III**, and shares this obverse-type with a reverse-type which strongly resembles that carried by an aureus minted in A.D. 207 in the name of Geta (see **Plate 14.6**). Gneecchi 1907, p.509, describes this 'Hercules and Telephus' type as, "La figura d'Ercole a riposo e leggermente modificata, così pure la posa del piccolo Telesforo; l'aquila sulla rupe ha le ali racchiuse invece che spiegate, ma la disposizione complessiva della scena di questo pezzo in cui lo stile, la modellatura e il rilievo tradiscono il cinquecento, e indubbiamente derivato da un originale antico e molto probabilmente da quello citato." More recently Voegtli, 1977, p.156, note 206, writes, "Gneecchi hielt das Medaillon für eine Renaissance-Schöpfung, doch gelangte 1972 ein stempelgleiches Exehandelt." Unfortunately Voegtli gives no further details concerning the piece which appeared in 1972, so this point cannot be checked. It is the opinion of Michel Amandry of the Cabinet des Médailles that this piece, and the other medallion in this collection sharing the same obverse, are forgeries. That the design is known from pieces from Eastern mints (for example see Voegtli 1977, Tf. 19.a, c - f), suggests the possibility that a forger may have used such a piece as a prototype. The outstanding condition of the piece (there is no evidence of wear) also points to the likelihood of it being forged. Furthermore the second reverse-type which shares this piece's obverse-type would appear to be a simplified copy of the Severan coin-type noted above. For example the figure on the extreme left of the coin-flan appears on the 'Antonine' medallion to be reduced to curiously engraved masses which bear no resemblance to a human figure.

⁴⁵ Cohen 1880, *Antonin* 1164. Gneecchi 1912, Tav.54.8. Banti 1984, Number 566. *LIMC* II, *Minerva* p.1103 n.405. Also see Melville Jones 1990, p.255.

⁴⁶ Apollodorus, *The Library* Book I.vii.1.

such as Ovid,⁴⁷ Prometheus modelled man from clay. While this example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction lacks intense physical action, it illustrates a most significant legendary event, the creation of the human race. Like the 'Hercules Discovering Telephus' medallion-type, the poses of the main figures of the composition attract attention to the specific act depicted, and serve to give the design a heightened sense of immediacy.

Compositionally the scene is well balanced and makes fine use of the flan, while the various poses of the figures and the added elements such as a rock and tree are visually interesting. On the medallion-type Minerva is shown standing to the right, facing to the left. Her right arm is extended and touches the head of the figure being modelled by Prometheus. To her left a small tree appears to curve around the sweep of the medallion-flan. Prometheus sits on a rock to the left. The modelled figure, shown on a smaller scale than the Titan and Minerva, faces to the left and appears to be nude. The poses of Minerva and Prometheus, who both face the clay figure and stretch out their hands towards it, focus the viewer's attention on their creation and invites one to reflect upon the significance of the

⁴⁷ For example Ovid relates how:

quam satus Iapeto, mixtam pluvialibus undis,
finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum,
pronaque cum spectent animalia cetera terram,
os homini sublime dedit caelumque videre
iussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.

Metamorphoses Book I. 82 - 86

mythological action depicted, and thus the type may be judged 'good' narrative.⁴⁸

A new Greek legend introduced to the medallion-flan has survived on examples issued by the Mint of Rome for Marcus Aurelius as Caesar during the period of his second consulship (Plate 8.3 - 4).⁴⁹ It depicts the construction of the Argo by Argus under the direction of Minerva. The legend is recorded in the first book of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica,⁵⁰ and by Apollodorus in his Library.⁵¹ The medallion-type may be considered an example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction, for it shows two recognizable individuals engaged in a specific action known from an external reference.

While the scene lacks great physical action and dramatic force, it nevertheless engages the viewer with its credible representations of figures. Argus is shown seated on a box and facing to the right, at

⁴⁸ Toynbee 1944, p.225, points out the similarities between this design and a late third century sarcophagus panel, (Stuart-Jones 1912, Plate 34 Number 13; see **Figure XIII**), a similarity which suggests that the medallion-type and later relief may have been copied from some lost original. The medallion-type may also be compared with another Late Imperial sarcophagus panel (Calza 1940, pp.195 - 196 and Figures 99 - 100; see **Figure XIV**). Also see Weigel 1984, p.197, note 2

⁴⁹ Cohen 1880, Marc Aurèle 1046. Gnechi 1912, Tav.65.10, and Kent 1978, Plate 88.309. LIMC II, Argos p.601, n.17. Similarities between a surviving relief panel and the medallion-type suggest the possibility of a common prototype. See Walters 1903, Plate XLIII; see **Figure XV**.

⁵⁰ Apollonius Rhodius, Argonautica Book I. 18 - 19.

⁵¹ Apollodorus, The Library Book I.ix.16.

work on the prow with an adze. Minerva stands to the right, her right hand extended towards the prow of the craft which is depicted between the two figures. An enhanced momentary quality is created by the poses of the figures which concentrate attention on Argus' actions. On one medallion depicting Minerva and Argus the substantial walls of a city are shown rising behind the prow and the figures (Plate 8.4). They rise to the upper region of the flan and are breached by a large arched gate which has battlements atop, and help to create a limited sense of spatial setting by serving as a 'backdrop' to the action depicted.⁵²

The goddess Diana, who had been celebrated extensively on the coinage of Augustus⁵³ and by two medallion-types issued under Hadrian,⁵⁴ was to reappear on the medallions of Antoninus Pius. These earlier Imperial depictions of Diana on coins and medallions were non-narrative in nature, often simply representing the goddess with her bow, hound or other attributes. Antoninus Pius was to continue this tradition of numismatically portraying the goddess.⁵⁵

⁵² The wall and the gate shown on the medallion (Plate 8.4) are similar to those depicted on a medallion of A.D. 159 which shows a figure of Neptune, standing before them. See Vermeule 1957(c), p.295, Toynbee 1944, p.139 and p.222, BMCRE IV, p.xcix, and Gnechi 1912, Tav.62.6; see Plate 8.5. These structures are also evident on the relief panel noted above; see Figure XV.

⁵³ Toynbee 1944, p.127 and p.140, and BMCRE I, Augustus Number 463f.

⁵⁴ Toynbee 1944, p.140.

⁵⁵ The prominence of Diana during these reigns is explained in part by Toynbee 1944, p.140: "It was doubtless the part ascribed to Diana in the battle of Naupactus, the reaffirmation thereby of Italian hegemony and the consequent adoption of Diana by the first Princes as co-patron with Apollo, which made her specially attractive to these Emperors who proposed themselves as 'new Augusti' (Continued. ...

While for the most part Antoninus Pius' numismatic depictions of Diana followed the tradition of depicting her on horseback,⁵⁶ with a bow and hound,⁵⁷ or stag,⁵⁸ or simply depicting her cult statue,⁵⁹ one medallion-type is worthy of more detailed attention. This design first appeared on the reverse of a medallion struck during the period of Antoninus Pius' fourth consulship (**Plate 8.6**),⁶⁰ and was later copied on a medallion issued under the name of Faustina the Younger (**Plate 8.7**).⁶¹ The action depicted is Diana at her bath. The design is similar to a panel of the Melfi sarcophagus (**Figure XVI**),⁶² which shows Diana in a pose like that of the medallion and includes some of the same landscape elements. While the similarities between the panel and medallion would suggest a common artistic

or as admirers of the Augustan attitude to Italy. It was, then, as a 'second Augustus' that Hadrian issued two Diana types ... But it was Pius' devotion to Diana as goddess of the Italian country-side which produced the largest and most charming series of medallions." Phillips 1971, p.52, suggests "... the design choice is due to Diana's popularity at Antoninus' native Lanuvium, which would combine with the Emperor's desire to revitalize Roman-Italian traditions to make the selection a logical one." Also see Strack 1937, pp.29 - 30.

⁵⁶ Gnechi 1912, Tav.148.16.

⁵⁷ Gnechi 1912, Tav.148.17.

⁵⁸ Gnechi 1912, Tav.148.15.

⁵⁹ Gnechi 1912, Tav.148.14.

⁶⁰ Cohen 1880, Antonin 1141. Gnechi 1912, Tav.50.8. Banti 1984, Number 552. LIMC II, Diana p.827, n.237.

⁶¹ Gnechi 1912, Tav.68.5. LIMC II, Diana p.827, n.237a.

⁶² This similarity has been noted by Toynbee 1944, p.221. See Strong 1923, Tav.XXXV.

prototype, the medallion-cutter has successfully adapted the subject to the limited field of the medallion-flan and created a convincing sense of place by the depiction of landscape features, figures and objects. To the left of the flan lie Diana's bow and quiver and above these is a large rock covered by a deer skin. To the right stands a large hound. The right-hand sweep of the medallion-flan is occupied by a grotto. Large rocks are shown and from their top grows a thick tree trunk which rises to the top of the field near the goddess' head. A stag's head is shown to lie on the rocks, and a spring gushes forth from the grotto.

The goddess herself is shown in the centre of the flan facing to the right. Her left arm is thrown above her head and holds one corner of a large piece of drapery which she is removing from her body. Her right arm, which is held out from the body, delicately holds up another corner of the drapery, which billows behind her in large folds.

While the various features of setting create a sense of place, and the goddess' unrobing gives the scene an enhanced momentary quality, can the design be considered to constitute narrative? For all its artistic qualities the scene appears as a typical scene of Diana at her bath. However such an action by Diana is central to the story of her encounter with Acteon.⁶³ While Acteon himself is not shown, it

⁶³ See, for example, Ovid, Metamorphoses Book III.138f., and Apollodorus, The Library Book III.iv.4.

could be argued that the presence of the hound in the scene alludes to the story of Acteon and his death. It is interesting to reflect that by seeing the goddess at her private bath the viewer of the scene is, in part, taking on the role of Acteon himself. In view of the type's internal artistic features and its possible connections with an external reference, it perhaps could be classified as constituting 'quasi-narrative'.

During the period of Antoninus Pius' fourth consulship a number of medallions depicting Greek mythological figures engaged in non-specific action were issued. Types of this category include depictions of Apollo,⁶⁴ Hercules crowned by Victory,⁶⁵ Venus and Cupid,⁶⁶ and Mercury.⁶⁷ These works are of limited interest from the narrative point of view, for the action depicted is 'typical' and not illustrative of a known external reference. Nevertheless they exhibit significant artistic features, particularly the die-engravers' ability to depict naturalistic representations of human figures within a spatial setting established by the use of a variety of visually interesting elements such as chariots, trees, and architectural features. Representative of this category of types is a medallion struck in A.D. 149 showing Bacchus and Ariadne riding in a biga pulled by

⁶⁴ Gneccchi 1912, Tavv.61.9 and 62.8.

⁶⁵ Gneccchi 1912, Tav.45.2.

⁶⁶ Gneccchi 1912, Tav.65.8 - 9.

⁶⁷ Gneccchi 1912, Tav.52.6.

panthers amidst a Bacchanalian train of figures which form a veritable 'human landscape' (Plate 8.8).⁶⁸ The various non-narrative mythological types issued during the period of Antoninus Pius' fourth consulship serve to illustrate his continued interest in numismatically celebrating Greek mythological figures.

Hercules, the hero/god celebrated on Hadrianic coins and medallions, was particularly favoured by Antoninus Pius.⁶⁹ Of the several non-narrative numismatic celebrations of Hercules issued under Antoninus Pius two medallic types are worthy of note.

The worn medallion of A.D. 145 which shows Hercules dragging a sacrificial victim towards an altar which stands before a terminus (Plate 8.9)⁷⁰ is compositionally similar to the Silvanus and Apollo medallion-types.⁷¹ The Silvanus and Hercules types depict a scene of sacrifice and (reading left to right of the flan) comprise a tree, the victim, the sacrificer, an altar and a vertical mass (the column of a

⁶⁸ Toynbee 1944, p.139, BMCRE IV, p.xciv, and Gneecchi 1912, Tav.65.7. It has been suggested by Strack 1937, p.114, that this joyous scene, so full of energy and life, was issued to celebrate the birth of imperial twins by Faustina the Elder.

⁶⁹ For Hadrianic numismatic celebrations of Hercules see BMCRE III, Numbers 9, 98 and p.cxxxix and p.255. Hercules was shown on several of Antoninus Pius' medallions engaged in specific actions (see Plates 7.1 - 3, 7.10 - 12, 7.14, 10.7, 12.1 - 4 and 12.6). Antoninus Pius' numismatic depictions of Hercules engaged in typical actions include: 'Hercules Crowned by Victory' (Gneecchi 1912, Tav. 45.3. Banti 1984, Number 95), 'Hercules and Ceres' (Gneecchi 1912, Tav.44.2), and 'Hercules Making Sacrifice' (Gneecchi 1912, Tav.54.5). See also LIMC V, Herakles p.179, n.3487.

⁷⁰ Cohen 1888, Antonin 1160. Gneecchi 1912, Tav.54.2. Banti 1984, Nr.570.

⁷¹ For discussion of the Silvanus and Apollo medallion-types; See Appendix One, Some Postumous Hadrianic Medallions, and Figures B.i - iv and C.vi - vii.

temple in the Silvanus example, and a terminus in the Hercules example). While both types create a stimulating sense of place, the engraver of the Hercules type has added some sense of drama to the scene he depicts by increasing the physical action of the figures. Whereas the figure of Silvanus strides to the altar with his hapless victim in tow, Hercules braces himself against the struggle of his unwilling victim. His left leg is bent and his body strains against the weight of the rearing victim which he grasps by the ear or horn with his right hand. While lacking external reference, this design has visually convincing figures, an interesting spatial setting, and an enhanced momentary quality created by the struggle between victim and hero.

The second noteworthy non-narrative type showing Hercules is a representation of the seated hero, probably based on a cult statue, which was shown on a silver quinarius⁷² and medallion reverses (Plate 9.1 - 2).⁷³ A Hadrianic medallion depicts Hercules in a similar pose (Plate 5.5),⁷⁴ and the design was also carried on aurei minted between A.D. 119 and 138.⁷⁵ It is possible that these various

⁷² Cohen 1880, Antonin 933 and BMCRE IV, p.80.

⁷³ Gneccchi 1912, Tavv.45.4 and 159.9. Banti 1984, Numbers 96 and 98, classifies the former piece as a sestertius, and the latter as a 'sestertius(?)' Gneccchi 1912, Vol.II, p.1, Number 17 and Banti 1984, Number 97 note another medallion-type with this reverse design. Toynbee 1944, p.138. note 110, notes a worn specimen in the Hall Collection, Llanymynech.

⁷⁴ Gneccchi 1912, Tav.159.5, and Dressel 1973, Taf.XXIV.289. A similar design was carried on a small bronze Hadrianic medallion, see Toynbee 1944, p.138, note 109, and Plate XXIII.6.

⁷⁵ BMCRE IV, Hadrian Number 9.

representations were based on the same statue-type.⁷⁶ The similarities in subject matter and design between these examples are further evidence of the strong artistic and thematic links between the die-engravers of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. The latter's type is also noteworthy for the masterful manner in which the engraver portrays the body of the hero. It is arguably one of the finest numismatic representations of the human figure in the history of the Imperial Mint of Rome. By the skilful use of the artistic device of foreshortening, enhanced by modelling of the torso, arms and legs which has the effect of casting shadows across the face of the medallion, the die-cutter has created a naturalistic figure and a convincing illusion of spatial depth within the limits of the medallion-flan. As has been justly claimed by Kent : "This splendid representation of the young Hercules, resting after his Labours, is one of the triumphs of Roman medallic art; it shows a remarkable mastery of the difficult technique of showing a figure in more than a single plane."⁷⁷

During the reign of Antoninus Pius several medallions were issued depicting reverse types of Vulcan at work. Some such types depict similar subjects - scenes of Minerva watching over a seated figure of Vulcan as he works. On one type he appears to be in the

⁷⁶ The statuary figure depicted on these pieces appears to be based on the seated Herakles, probably by Lysippos. See Robertson 1975, p.473, and Bieber 1955, Figures 80 - 81.

⁷⁷ Kent 1978, Plate 88, Number 308.

process of making a fulmen,⁷⁸ on another a large military helmet. Neither type is known from Roman numismatic production before this period. As the reverses of these medallions lack identifying legends, and because the helmet being made by Vulcan cannot be associated with a specific heroic figure, it is impossible to distinguish whether they are to be interpreted as narrative works, illustrative of some specific external reference, such as the description of Vulcan's workshop given in the Aeneid,⁷⁹ or as representing Vulcan in a 'typical' attitude with Minerva watching.⁸⁰ While the types cannot be classed with any degree of certainty as narrative works, they do exhibit some significant artistic features.

The type of Vulcan creating a fulmen is known from medallions struck before A.D. 146 in the names of Antoninus Pius (**Plate 9.3**),⁸¹ Marcus Aurelius as Caesar (**Plate 9.4**),⁸² and Divine Faustina (**Plate 9.5**).⁸³ The continuity of medallion production between the periods of Antoninus Pius' third and fourth consulships

⁷⁸ Cohen 1880, Antonin 1156, Gnechi 1912, p.18 and Banti 1980, p.308.

⁷⁹ Vergil, Aeneid Book VIII.307f.

⁸⁰ Mattingly (BMCRE IV, p.xcv), suggests that the types may be symbolic allusions to the re-arming of the Roman legions.

⁸¹ Gnechi 1912, Tav.52.4. Banti 1984, Number 541. LIMC II, Minerva e Vulcanus p.1099, n.351.

⁸² Gnechi 1912, Tav.65.2.

⁸³ Gnechi 1912, Tav.59.1.

is reflected by the re-issuing of this type during his eighteenth and twenty-second tribunes (Plate 9.6 - 7).⁸⁴

Compositionally the scene is well balanced and makes excellent use of the available plan. Minerva is depicted standing to the right and behind her a large shield decorated with a serpent is shown. Minerva's right arm is extended towards the god Vulcan, and serves to address the viewer's attention to his employment. Vulcan himself is shown seated to the left, holding in his right hand a fulmen which rests on the a large anvil lying before him. The mass of the seated god balances that of the standing goddess, details of his chair balance the snake-decorated shield and, while the anvil largely divides the scene into two halves, the delicate placement of the god's and goddess' arms above the anvil maintains compositional unity. The figures themselves are represented naturalistically. The die-engraver has, for example, carefully depicted the manner in which Minerva's drapery folds around her slightly bent left leg, and her relaxed attitude finds balance in Vulcan's outstretched right leg. These fine points of detail serve not only to create a harmonious balance within the work and stimulate the viewer's interest in the design, but also give the scene an enhanced momentary quality, similar in nature to

⁸⁴ For that of the eighteenth tribunate, see Gneecchi 1912, Vol.II, p.18, Number 83, Tav.51.3, and Banti 1984, Number 543; see Plate 9.6, and that of the twenty-second tribunate, see Cohen 1880, Antonin 1156, Gneecchi 1912, Vol.II, p.18, Number 84 and Banti 1984, Number 544, corresponding to Cabinet des Médailles Number 119; see Plate 9.7.

that created by the Hadrianic 'Apollo Musagetes' medallion-type (Plate 4.7).⁸⁵

The second medallion-type issued during the period of Antoninus Pius' third consulship depicting Vulcan and Minerva shows the god bending over a large helmet (Plate 9.8).⁸⁶ Minerva's dress and attitude appear similar to those of the goddess as shown on the previous type; however, perhaps due to wear, her body appears less naturalistic. Her downturned head focuses the viewer's attention towards the helmet, which she appears to touch with her right hand. The helmet itself rests on a cippus. Vulcan, who is shown to the left, is seated on a rock or stool. He is shown in profile with his right arm raised towards the helmet he is working on. Artistically this design closely parallels that discussed above, and while it appears less refined and its figures less naturalistic, this may be due to wear on surfaces of the surviving medallions. Both types serve to highlight the medallion-engravers' ability to depict recognizable mythological figures in harmoniously balanced compositions within the rigid limitations of the circular flan.

Vulcan was also celebrated on a further medallion-type issued during Pius' fifteenth tribunate (Plate 9.9).⁸⁷ On this type the god

⁸⁵ See Chapter Three.A, pp.38 - 41

⁸⁶ Cohen 1880, Antonin 1144, Gnechi 1912, Vol.II, p.18 Number 77, Strack 1937, Taf.XXI Number 544, and Banti 1984, Number 542.

⁸⁷ Cohen 1880, Antonin 1155. Gnechi 1912, Tav. 52.7. BMCRE IV, p.xcvi, and Banti 1984, Number 557.

stands in the centre of the flan, dominating the design and surrounded by the fruits of his labour - to the left a statue of Minerva on a stand with a large shield below, and to the right a helmet resting on a large bench. In his right hand he holds a hammer and in his left a greave which rests on the top of the anvil. Whether the scene illustrates the making of arms for some hero such as Aeneas or Achilles, or was simply meant to represent the Lord of Fire engaged in typical action, is impossible to ascertain. While the type cannot be classified as narrative (it lacks an external reference which would enable the viewer to identify the scene as depicting a specific action), it nevertheless engages the viewer's attention by its organic, naturalistic depiction of Vulcan at work in the fiery heart of Mount Aetna.

B) THE 'PROGRAMME SERIES' OF ANTONINUS PIUS

During the period of Antoninus Pius' third consulship a truly remarkable series of medallions and sub-medallions, supplemented in some cases by types on the regular coinage, was issued by the Mint of Rome. This series comprises arguably the most significant mythological types in the history of the Roman mint for two major reasons. Firstly, from the artistic point of view, some of the types of the series represent the culmination of Roman mythological numismatic narrative art. Secondly they introduce distinctively Roman subject matter to the medallion- and coin-flans. With some

notable exceptions such as the traditional 'She-wolf and Twins' motif and the 'Aeneid' medallion-type, Imperial numismatic mythological depictions up until this time have largely been dominated by Greek legends and characters: Jupiter and Amalthea, Minerva and Neptune, Hercules and the Hesperides, Apollo Musagetes, and Pan. Antoninus Pius' personal interest in the early history of Rome is hinted at in his actions concerning the city of Pallantium, the traditional homeland of Evander.⁸⁸

It must be stressed that Antoninus Pius did not replace Greek mythological traditions with those of Rome. As demonstrated above his engravers copied and developed many of the types of his predecessor with their philhellenic tradition. Rather Antoninus Pius, through his medallion series, raised the standing of traditional Roman legends within the empire by giving them official recognition, and set them alongside those of Greece. "Pius was no less zealous than the philhellenic Hadrian in proclaiming the gospel of Rome's Hellenic heritage... As is clear both from his 'province' coin series of 139 and from his mythological medallion types, Pius' aim was not to reverse Hadrian's cosmopolitan and philhellenic tendencies, but to follow them, while balancing them by a new emphasis on Italy and Rome... Similarly, Pius' medallions combine a genuinely Hadrianic devotion to Greek art and Greek mythology

⁸⁸ Pausanias, Arcadia Book VIII.xlii.1 - 4.

with the expression of his personal predilection for the 'national' religion and for the legends and history of early Rome."⁸⁹

Pond Rothman, who argues that many 'Hadrianic' medallions were issued posthumously in Hadrian's name under Antoninus Pius, expresses the view that "We do not adequately appreciate the fervor of Antoninus' encouragement of a philhellenic, retrospective culture if we say that his aim was to continue Hadrian's policies, altering them only by adding an Italic emphasis ... it was Antoninus who first used the art of the medallions systematically to honor the Greek as well as the Latin heritage of the empire. By issuing medallions for Hadrian with an iconography which proclaims this cultural program, the emperor both formulated a policy and acknowledged its source in the reign of Hadrian."⁹⁰ While points of her argument must be questioned,⁹¹ it is true that, in general terms, her suggestion that Hadrian's personal philhellenic enthusiasm did not lead to an intensive medallic celebration of Greek myths appears correct. Rather his reign witnessed the introduction of such types, and it was left to Antoninus Pius to re-emphasize Hadrian's philhellenic interests, through the re-issuing of some Hadrianic medallion-types, while at the same time clearly emphasizing his own devotion to

⁸⁹ Toynbee 1942, p.43.

⁹⁰ Pond Rothman 1978, pp.126 - 127.

⁹¹ For discussion of Pond Rothman's arguments for the issuing of posthumous 'Hadrianic' medallions, see Kaiser-Raiss 1981, and Chapter Three.A and B, and Appendix One, Some Posthumous Hadrianic Medallions.

Hellenic traditions by the introduction of a considerable number of new Greek mythological scenes to the medallion-flans.

Toynbee argues that the various medallion-types issued by Antoninus Pius which celebrate Rome's myths and legends should be grouped together and seen as a 'programme', a series of closely related designs all serving a common propagandist purpose.⁹² She argues that they were issued in order to prepare the way for celebrations of the nine-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Rome which fell in the year A.D. 147/8.⁹³ "They were not struck as a record of the Secular games, but to herald them and to prepare for them.... Antoninus Pius issued these medallion- and coin-types that he might stir the pride of his subjects in their glorious past and prepare them to celebrate with enthusiasm the nine-hundredth anniversary of the birthday of Rome."⁹⁴

While this argument goes some way in explaining the comparatively sudden appearance of a wide range of mythological depictions, two points counselling caution must be raised in discussing the aim and scope of the 'programme series'. Firstly it must be remembered that, with the exception of the 'Mars and Rhea'

⁹² Toynbee 1942, p.43.

⁹³ Toynbee 1942, p.43, quoting the authority of Sextus Aurelius Victor's *Liber de Caesaribus* 1505, sets the date of the anniversary at A.D. 147. Garzetti 1974, p.467, quoting the authority of the *Fasti Ostienses*, sets the date at A.D. 148.

⁹⁴ Toynbee 1942, p.43.

(Plate 11.6 - 7), and 'Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius' (Plate 10.2 - 4) types, the series was limited to medallions and sub-medallions which were, by their very nature, not intended for circulation but were tokens to be presented to a restricted circle of citizens.⁹⁵ If the emperor's purpose in issuing these types was, as Toynbee argues, to 'stir the pride of his subjects', Antoninus must have directed his attention to the privileged few rather than the populace as a whole.

Secondly, the scope of the 'series' is by no means certain. Toynbee includes in the series medallions issued by Antoninus, and in the names of Faustina the Elder and Marcus Aurelius as Caesar, ranging in date from A.D. 139 to 147. The factor common to all the types included in her definition of the 'series' is that they depict traditional Roman legends; thus she groups them into a 'series' based upon their subject matter. Whether or not the Imperial minting authority regarded them as a 'series' distinct from those types depicting Greek mythological subjects is debatable. Nevertheless Toynbee's terminology of the 'programme series' will be followed, for it provides a recognised framework for discussion of these most significant examples of numismatic narrative art.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Toynbee 1944, pp.112 - 121.

⁹⁶ For further discussion of the scope of the series, and examples of non-narrative types which may be related to the preparatory celebrations of the anniversary, see Weigel 1984, pp.187 - 200.

Garzetti makes some interesting observations with regard to the 'programme series'. He states: "The exaltation of Rome and the exploitation of the ancient traditions of her origin were motifs that simply acquired extra solemnity from the recurrence of the anniversary of another hundred years of her existence (celebrated in 148); they had already been given prominence by Hadrian... one of the most solemn issues of coins made during the reign, an issue that went on from 139 until 147, precisely in preparation for the centennial celebrations, commemorated all the principal figures and episodes.... There was a great imaginary return to origins and at the same time to the spirit of the Augustan age as expressed in the Aeneid. Yet the equal exaltation of the Greek divinities long absorbed into the classical Pantheon eliminated from the exhumation any suspicion of conservative extremism or boorish exclusivism."⁹⁷ If we leave aside his error that the series consisted of a series of coins, for medallions made up by far the greatest number of pieces in the series, Garzetti makes three interesting points.

Firstly, he suggests the importance of the Hadrianic period, in which coin and medallion-types celebrating Rome's origins were issued, as paving the way for the Antoninus Pius' series. However, it should be remembered that few Hadrianic types (only the 'She-wolf and Twins' types, and the 'Great Sow' and 'Aeneid' medallion-types), were directly related to the traditions surrounding Rome's

⁹⁷ Garzetti 1974, p.467. For further comment on Garzetti's views, see Pond Rothman 1978, pp. 126 - 127.

legendary past. While these types, in particular the 'Aeneid' medallion-type, may have provided direct inspiration for some of the types used in the 'programme series', it is in the area of artistic manner, in particular an interest in depicting detailed and visually convincing settings and naturalistic figures engaged in complex action poses (artistic considerations which are so vital to good narrative art), that the engravers of the 'programme series' owe their greatest debt to their Hadrianic predecessors.

Secondly, Garzetti rightly stresses that the 'spirit of the Augustan age as expressed in the Aeneid' was a driving ideal during the period leading up to Antoninus Pius' celebrations of the nine hundredth anniversary of Rome's founding. As will be demonstrated the Aeneid itself may well have provided the direct inspiration for some types of the 'programme series'.

Finally, Garzetti's point concerning the continued importance of Greek themes and subject matter for Roman coins and medallions during Antoninus Pius' reign serves to re-emphasize the emperor's philhellenic spirit.

For the purpose of this thesis the 'programme series' will be divided into five categories based on the dates of issue of the pieces and the striking personage: a medallion issued in A.D.139; the main body of the series issued in the name of the emperor and struck between A.D. 140 and 145; four types struck posthumously for Faustina the Elder; two medallion-types struck between A.D. 145

and 147; and medallion-types issued in the name of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar. In addition to these categories, two medallion-types which are not classified by Toynbee as belonging to the 'programme series', but which display artistic features and subject matter paralleled by designs of the series, will be discussed.

I - The 'Aeneid' Medallion-type Re-issued.

The 'Aeneid' medallion-type, issued with an obverse-type of Hadrian (Plate 6.1),⁹⁸ was also issued in A.D. 139 in conjunction with an obverse of Antoninus Pius (Plate 10.1).⁹⁹ This type may well have been the inspiration for the main body of the 'programme series' which was to follow. It illustrated, in a dramatic manner, the ability of the medallion-flan to depict legendary events, and also served to re-introduce the Aeneas legend to Imperial numismatic products. The subject of Aeneas' adventures was to recur on several types of the 'programme series'.

While the major narrative features of this remarkable design have been discussed in regard to the piece bearing the obverse of

⁹⁸ It must be noted that Pond Rothman 1978, pp.112 - 113, argues, on iconographical grounds, that the type (which she calls the 'Aeneas medallion') bearing the obverse-type of Hadrian was issued posthumously in his name under Antoninus Pius. See Chapter Three, Note 56, and Kaiser-Raiss 1981, p.191 for discussion of this point.

⁹⁹ This type bears the obverse legend **IMP T AEL HADR ANTONINUS AUG PIUS**. See Cohen 1880, *Antonin* 1183 Gnechi 1912, Tav.55.8, Banti 1984, Number 585, and Strong 1939, Plate XII.

Hadrian (Plate 6.1),¹⁰⁰ the medallion bearing the obverse of Antoninus Pius (Plate 10.1) has survived in a much finer condition, and several points of artistic detail to be observed on this example are worthy of note.¹⁰¹ Perhaps the most striking feature of the latter medallion is the die-cutter's use of several planes of relief. The visual illusion of spatial depth created in the design by the employment of this technique adds credence to the design and enhances the viewer's interest. Within the few millimetres of depth afforded by the flan the engraver has used at least three distinct planes. The battlement towers of the depicted wall, for example, are shown in very low relief, while the central section of the wall, including its gate, appears in proportionally much higher relief. Similarly the far door of the Temple of Ceres is shown in very low relief, while the circular roof and walls actually curve out from the medallion-face and rise to a higher plane. The illusion of spatial depth created by this use of planes of relief is greatly enhanced by the effect of light and shadow falling across the face of the flan, for the entrance to the Temple of Ceres and the arched opening of the gateway appear in shadows cast by the surrounding architectural features. The Great Sow, shown in the central zone of the medallion, dominates the design. While the piglets surrounding her and her lower limbs are shown in very low relief, her body curves

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter Three.B, pp.50 - 66.

¹⁰¹ I am indebted to Marc Bompaire of the Cabinet de Médailles, Bibliothèque Nationale, for supplying a cast of this medallion, and to Michel Amandry for his kind help in arranging access to the piece during my period of study at the Cabinet des Médailles.

dramatically onto a plane of relief higher than that of the Temple of Ceres above and the main section of the wall below. Her body is strikingly modelled, with the shadows cast in the recesses of her eye socket and withers increasing the visual illusion that she is a three dimensional creature.

To what extent the example of this type which was issued in conjunction with the Hadrianic obverse (Plate 6.1) exhibited the features described above is difficult to assess, but they serve to argue that the type is of significance in the history of Roman numismatic production not only for its unique narrative quality, but also for its outstanding illusionistic effects.¹⁰²

II - The Main Body of the 'Programme Series',

A.D. 140 - 145

A series of numismatic pieces was issued by Antoninus Pius during the period of the 'programme series' depicting Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius fleeing the city of Troy. It should be noted that while Aeneas and Anchises had been celebrated on Roman numismatics from Republican times,¹⁰³ Antoninus Pius' types depicting them include the figure of Ascanius, and they are engraved in a much more naturalistic manner. This composition was first

¹⁰² See Appendix Two, The 'Aeneid' Medallion - A Narrative Interpretation.

¹⁰³ See Chapters One and Two, and Plates 2.6 - 7, 3.10, 6.1 and 10.1.

employed on a series of aurei (Plate 10.2)¹⁰⁴ and sestertii (Plate 10.3 - 4)¹⁰⁵ struck between A.D. 140 and 142, and later on a pseudo-medallion issued during the period of Antoninus Pius' third consulship (Plate 10.5).¹⁰⁶ The pseudo-medallion's design appears to be similar to that employed on the sestertius-types, but "... removed from the sphere of common currency by being struck on a medallion flan."¹⁰⁷

The scene depicted in these coin-types and on the psuedo-medallion is related by Vergil:

ergo age, care pater, cervici imponere nostrae;
 ipse subibo umeris, nec me labor iste gravabit.
 quo res cumque cadent, unum et commune periculum,
 una salus ambobus erit. mihi parvus Iulus
 sit comes, et longe servet vestigia coniunx.

Aeneid Book II. 707 - 711

¹⁰⁴ BMCRE IV, Antoninus Pius Numbers 237. Also see LIMC I, Aeneias p.390, n.135 (where a sestertius-type is mistakenly reproduced). Hill 1970, p.184 Number 258.

¹⁰⁵ Cohen 1880, Antonin 655 and 761. BMCRE IV, Antoninus Pius Numbers 1264, 1292 (see Plate 10.3) and Plate 29.5 (see Plate 10.4). RIC III, Numbers 615 and 627. Banti 1984, Numbers 309 and 373. Hill 1970, pp.184 - 187, Numbers 261, 262 and 397. Hill's dating for these coins is followed for the sake of this thesis.

¹⁰⁶ Gneccchi 1912, Tav.160.1.

¹⁰⁷ Toynbee 1942, p.44.

The figures shown are all recognizable individuals engaged in a specific action known from the external reference in Vergil, and they may therefore be considered to constitute examples of narrative art.¹⁰⁸ While the temporal setting is specific, the figures are shown in isolation on the flans and hence lack a spatial dimension.

The figures of Aeneas and his family are depicted in a naturalistic manner, and their poses are both visually interesting and credible. The design shows Ascanius standing to the left with his left arm extended and held by his father. The figure of Aeneas stands to the centre of the flans and dominates the design. His bent left leg, bearing the weight of his father, indicates his movement to the right of the field. The figure of Anchises is shown seated on Aeneas' left shoulder. Anchises supports himself with his right hand resting on Aeneas' right shoulder and is largely obscured from view by Aeneas' head and shoulders.

It has been suggested by Carson¹⁰⁹ and Weigel¹¹⁰ that besides illustrating the event of Aeneas' flight, the types may additionally

¹⁰⁸ Weigel, 1984, p.189, notes that "... Antoninus was the first to include Ascanius, thus emphasizing the descent of the Romans as well as piety and religious concerns. It may be that Antoninus's moneyers were consciously following the story as it was found in Vergil, where Ascanius's presence is mentioned."

¹⁰⁹ Carson 1980, Number 596. Also see Galinsky 1969, p.6.

¹¹⁰ Weigel 1984, pp.188 - 189.

have been intended to represent Antoninus, pious both to his adoptive father, Hadrian, and to his adopted son, Marcus Aurelius. A similar interpretation is made by Toynbee¹¹¹ and Garzetti¹¹² of a representation of Aeneas sacrificing to Juno shown on a medallion struck by Marcus Aurelius as Caesar, where the emperor, the 'new pious Aeneas' is shown in the hero's guise (Plate 12.2 - 3).¹¹³

The arrangement of the figures of Aeneas and his family as shown on Antoninus Pius' coins and pseudo-medallion can also be observed on several depictions of the subject in other artistic media, including a wall painting from Pompeii (Figure XVII),¹¹⁴ and the 'Tabula Iliaca' relief (Figure VII).¹¹⁵ It is likely, given their strong compositional parallels, that the inspiration for these representations and the numismatic pieces of Antoninus Pius was a monumental prototype depicting the figures, perhaps the group from the pediment of the Temple of Divine Augustus (Figure XVIII).¹¹⁶ The die-engravers would appear to have made no

¹¹¹ Toynbee 1942, p.45, and Toynbee 1944, p.217.

¹¹² Garzetti 1974, p.467.

¹¹³ See Chapter Four.B.v, pp.153 - 155.

¹¹⁴ Galinsky 1969, Figure 27.

¹¹⁵ Sadurska 1964, Planche I.IA.

¹¹⁶ The Temple of the Divine Augustus was depicted on coins minted during the principate of Gaius. For example see Breglia 1968, p.51. Also a series of sestertii bearing the reverse legend **TEMPLUM DIV AUG REST SC COS III** were issued at Rome between A.D.158 and 159. See BMCRE IV, Antoninus Pius Numbers 2063 - 2066. Grant 1950, p.106, notes that Romulus advancing holding
(Continued. ...

major compositional changes to the group, and simply reduced the scale of the figures in order to place them within the various flans.

A medallion issued between A.D. 140 and 143 depicts the landing of Aeneas in Latium, the discovery of the Great Sow, and architectural features, possibly representing the city of Alba Longa or Lavinium (Plate 10.6 (a) - (b)).¹¹⁷ The type is extremely significant from the narrative point of view for it depicts simultaneously three events, recorded in the Aeneid, which are temporally separated. In order to examine the narrative mode adopted by the die-engraver of this type it is first necessary to describe in some detail the various elements of the work in order to relate them to the known external story which they appear to illustrate. From the artistic point of view it should be noted that the design is complex and detailed, with a surprising variety of architectural and landscape elements which combine to create a series of spatial settings.

The first episode of the story being depicted is the actual landing of Aeneas and his followers. To the extreme right of the flan the prow of their boat is shown. A section of the vessel's yardarm and

a spear, and Aeneas carrying Anchises and leading Ascanius, are shown on the angles of the roof of the temple shown on these types.

¹¹⁷ Gnechi 1912, Tav.54.9. Toynbee 1944, Plate IV.3. Banti 1984, Number 584. LIMC II, Askanios p.861, n.14; see Plate 10.6 (a). Cohen 1880, Vol. II Antonin p.393, Number 1171; see Plate 10.6 (b). Also see Giglioli 1941, p.114 and Figure 3, and Melville Jones 1990, p.6.

its curved prow are visible, and the torsos and heads of two or three sailors are shown. A gangway, angled at forty-five degrees, leads from the boat and rests at the feet of the sow. The gangway rests on a heavy ground-line which stretches across the lower portion of the field, and sinuous lines, representing water, are shown between the gangway and the ground-line. On the sloping gangway stand Aeneas and his son, Ascanius, both facing to the left. In scale they are very much greater than the figures of the sailors waiting in the boat. Indeed the figure of Aeneas, given its scale and its position within the centre of the flan, dominates the design in much the same way as the figure of Hercules does on the 'Hercules and Cacus' medallion-type (Plate 10.7). Ascanius, standing behind his father, has his right hand grasped by Aeneas' left hand. Aeneas' right arm is extended, indicating the Great Sow.

The second element of the story depicted is the discovery of the Great Sow, prophesised by Helenus, on the banks of the Tiber River.¹¹⁸ The creature rests back on her haunches, with her front legs extended in a stance similar to that depicted on other medallion-types (Plate 6.2, 6.9 - .11).¹¹⁹ Several young appear to be suckling. The sow sits within a grotto. The trunk of a small tree, shown emerging from behind the sow's rear and rising with a slight curve into two fruit-bearing branches, occupies the area between the

¹¹⁸ Vergil, *Aeneid* Book III. 389 - 393.

¹¹⁹ See Chapters Three.B, pp.52f. and Four.A, p.74.

top of the grotto and the ground-line on which architectural elements stand. On the roof of the grotto, which appears to be made up of large stones, a curious curved feature like a walking-stick is depicted.¹²⁰

Three architectural elements are shown directly above the grotto.¹²¹ There are striking similarities between these features and those depicted in the upper zone of the 'Aeneid' medallion-type, issued with obverse-types of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius (Plates 6.1 and 10.1).¹²² The reverses of both medallion-types show a circular building on the extreme left, a low altar (?), and a third architectural feature to the right. While in the case of the 'Aeneid' medallion-type this third feature is clearly a circular enclosure protecting a tree, it appears less distinct on the medallion-type in question. The architectural feature itself appears circular, perhaps suggesting that it is a circular enclosure like that on the 'Aeneid' medallion-type; however the object rising above it does not divide into the recognizable branches of a tree. Whether it is meant to depict a tree trunk or, more likely, flames issuing from a circular altar is unclear.¹²³ These similarities are strong enough to suggest

¹²⁰ See below, Note 133.

¹²¹ Cohen 1880, Vol.II *Antonin*, p.393 Number 1171, and Gnechi 1912, p.20 Number 99, describe the presence of walls on the design. No such features were observable on the single surviving specimen which I examined at the Cabinet des Médailles.

¹²² See Chapters Three.B, pp.50 - 66 and Four.B.i, pp.108 - 110.

¹²³ See below, Note 133.

that the engraver of this medallion-type borrowed and adapted elements of the 'Aeneid' medallion-type, or that both shared common elements with some other artistic prototype.

The various architectural elements rest on a ground-line which runs from the left of the flan, parallel to that on which Aeneas and the sow rests, and extends as far as the figure of Aeneas. This ground-line serves to give the various architectural elements depicted a common base while dividing them from the scene of the Great Sow below. The unity of the design is maintained by the figure of Aeneas, for his body is shown to traverse both levels of the field. The identification of the specific settlement represented by these buildings is open to debate. Given the importance of the figures of Aeneas and Ascanius to the design it is possible that the architectural features depicted may represent either the city of Lavinium, founded by Aeneas, or Alba Longa, the city founded thirty years later by Ascanius on the site where the Great Sow was found.

From the narrative point of view the scene is of particular interest because the artist, by showing the landing in Latium, the white sow and the features of Alba Longa or Lavinium, has clearly transgressed the principle of temporal unity. In the Aeneid Vergil relates the landing of Aeneas;

Aeneas primique duces et pulcher Iulus
 corpora sub ramis deponunt arboris altae
 instituuntque dapes et adorea liba per herbam
 subiciunt epulis (sic Iuppiter ipse monebat)
 et Cereale solum pomis agrestibus augent.

Book VII. 107 - 111

This episode is followed in the narrative by Aeneas' founding of a military camp,¹²⁴ and adventures involving Latinus and Amata, Juno's revenge, and the start of the war with Turnus. Following a lull in the fighting Aeneas finds the Great Sow:

Ecce autem subitum atque oculis mirabile monstrum,
 candida per silvam cum fetu concolor albo
 procubuit viridique in litore conspicitur sus.

Aeneid Book VIII. 81 - 83

The finding of the sow brings true part of the prophecy of Helenus who told Aeneas that he would discover it, and continued: "is locus urbis erit, requies ea certa laborum".¹²⁵ The place in which the sow was found was the site of the future city of Alba Longa.

¹²⁴ Vergil, Aeneid Book VII. 157 - 159. The camp was later to be the site of the city of Lavinium.

¹²⁵ Vergil, Aeneid Book III. 393.

Clearly the design of this medallion 'simultaneously' depicts three events separated in time. The numismatic precedent for this departure from the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction, the method common to almost all numismatic mythological types, was the Hadrianic 'Aeneid' medallion-type copied by Antoninus Pius' die-engravers in A.D. 139. However, whereas the artist responsible for the 'Aeneid' medallion-type chose to divide his field into three distinct and separate zones and depicts only one action, the carrying of Anchises by Aeneas, the maker of this type, while dividing his field into three zones, maintains the overall unity of the design, and would appear uninterested in suggesting temporal progression.

Being neither 'monoscenic', 'cyclic' nor 'continuous',¹²⁶ how might the mode of narrative depiction employed by the die-engraver of this type be categorized? Wickhoff's description of the 'completirend' (complementary) method, outlined above,¹²⁷ would appear inadequate to describe the nature of the medallion-type. His description of the method is based on the principle that scenes of action which took place before or after a central action are added to it in a 'complementary' manner.¹²⁸ The 'Aeneas and Ascanius in

¹²⁶ For discussion of these various methods of narrative depiction, see Introduction, Chapter One and Chapter Three.B. Also see Weitzmann 1970, Snodgrass 1982, and Meyboom 1978.

¹²⁷ See Wickhoff 1900, pp.13f. and Chapter Three.B, pp.64 - 65.

¹²⁸ Wickhoff 1900, pp.13f. For objections to his terminology see Weitzmann 1970, pp.33 - 34, and Himmelmann-Wildschutz 1967.

Latium' medallion-type does not have a 'central event'. Neither the landing in Latium nor the finding of the Great Sow (the two distinct actions depicted), is emphasised by the artist as being the 'central action'.¹²⁹ Indeed they appear almost to be two parts of the same action, and it is only by recalling an external reference that one becomes aware that the two events were distinct and temporally separated.¹³⁰ Rejecting Wickhoff's terminology, Weitzmann defines as 'simultaneous' the narrative method whereby the artist "... depicts [several] moments of the tale as one single scene without repeating any of its participants, thereby transgressing the limitations of the unity of time ... [and creates] the impression of a single scene in which time is not fixed, but transitory."¹³¹ This medallion may be categorized as an example of the simultaneous method of narrative depiction as defined by Weitzmann.¹³² As described, the action of Aeneas' landing and discovering the sow are shown to take place at the same time, with neither action being given emphasis as the most

¹²⁹ An objection to the term 'complementary' is made by Himmelmann-Wildschutz 1967, in his discussion of an Attic blackfigure cup. See also Snodgrass 1982, p.14. Meyboom 1978, pp.70 - 71, rejects the term 'simultaneous', stating that "... the principle of adding to a central scene scenes, figures, or objects, to complement the story represented by that scene, is the essential element of the method." While noting Himmelmann-Wildschutz's objections to the term 'complementary', Meyboom does not adequately discuss this point.

¹³⁰ It should be noted that even the tradition recorded by Tzetzes (see Chapter Three, Note 54), places the events of the 'eating of the tables' between Aeneas' landing near Laurentum and the finding of the Great Sow, and thus temporally separates them.

¹³¹ Weitzmann 1970, pp.13 - 14.

¹³² Weitzmann 1970, pp.13 - 14. Snodgrass 1982, p.5, prefers to use the term 'synoptic' in his discussion of this method. For objections to Snodgrass' terminology see Chapter One, Notes 45 and 47.

significant or 'central', and the city of either Alba Longa, built on the site of the discovery of the sow, or Lavinium is depicted rising behind it.

The striking similarities between design elements of this medallion-type and a small marble relief panel (Figure XIX)¹³³ suggest that this exceptional medallion, representing the only true example of the simultaneous mode of narrative art to be employed in Roman mythological numismatic depiction, was possibly inspired by a work in another artistic medium which served as a prototype for the medallion-type. If such a relationship is assumed, the medallion not only reflects the die-engraver's technical skill in reducing the scene so as to fit within the miniature scale of the medallion-die, but also his artistic talent in arranging it so as to create a balanced and visually stimulating composition within the circular shape of the medallion-flan.

¹³³ Walters 1928, pp.84 - 85, Plate LII. I am most grateful to the authorities at the British Museum, London, for arranging access to this piece, which has been held in storage for some time. A relationship between the relief panel and medallion-design is most apparent, and close inspection of the relief panel clarifies several features which appear indistinct on the medallion. Firstly, the curious 'walking-stick' shape was clearly meant to represent an arched feature visible on the panel (it appears above the sow's head, to the left of the tree). It would seem that the die-engraver, while copying this feature, has modified his design by omitting the right-hand half of the curve so as to more clearly show Aeneas' outstretched right hand. Also the panel appears to represent two altars; both are composed of three sections, but that to the right is issuing flames or smoke. It would therefore seem most likely that the medallion-design also depicts these features, and not, like the 'Aeneid' medallion, a tree with protective enclosure.

A framed medallion survives from the 'programme series' depicting Hercules delivering the people of the Aventine from the monster Cacus (Plate 10.7).¹³⁴ The story of Hercules and Cacus survives to us in the works of Livy,¹³⁵ Vergil¹³⁶ and Ovid.¹³⁷ Vergil recounts the climax of the story in graphic detail:

hic Cacus in tenebris incendia vana vomentem
 corripit in nodum complexus, et angit inhaerens
 elisos oculos et siccum sanguine guttur.
 panditur extemplo foribus domus atra revolsis
 abstractaeque boves adiurataeque rapinae
 caelo ostenduntur, pedibusque informe cadaver
 protrahitur. nequeunt expleri corda tuendo
 terribilis oculos, voltum villosaque saetis
 pectora semiferi atque extinctos faucibus ignis.

Aeneid Book VIII. 259 - 267

While the specific scene of Hercules receiving the homage of the Aventine dwellers depicted on this medallion-type was not referred to in the Aeneid, Fasti or in Livy's work, it might be surmised that,

¹³⁴ Cohen 1880, Antonin 1161. Gnechi 1912, Tav.53.1. Banti 1984, Number 571. LIMC III, Cacus p.177, n.1, and Melville Jones 1990, p.136.

¹³⁵ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book I. viii.3 - 15.

¹³⁶ Vergil, Aeneid Book VIII. 185 - 280.

¹³⁷ Ovid, Fasti I.550 - 586.

considering the close relationship between various types of the 'programme series' and legendary events recorded by these writers, the medallion-engraver was inspired to choose his subject matter from a written source, and then proceeded to illustrate it in a manner perhaps influenced by the Greek masterpiece on which the wallpaintings of Herculaneum and Pompeii were based.¹³⁸

This monoscenic design, depicting the triumph of Hercules over one of his foes, is significant in many respects. It demonstrates the medallion-engraver's interest in depicting naturalistic figures engaged in a specific and visually stimulating action. Interestingly the engraver has chosen to depict the hero in the act celebrating his victory, rather than the preceding physical struggle. The figure of the hero Hercules, perhaps copied from a statue-type,¹³⁹ dominates the design. In scale he is represented much larger than the four Aventine dwellers who are depicted near him. Although worn, the figure of Hercules appears robust and well muscled. His left shoulder and arm are covered by the lion skin, while the right arm, holding the club, is extended to receive an offer of thanks from a stooped citizen. This Aventine dweller is shown with his legs slightly bent at the knees and his hands supporting the hero's right arm from below,

¹³⁸ The gesture depicted, clearly an expression of homage, is paralleled on wall paintings from Herculaneum (Bandinelli 1970, Plate 115; see **Figure XX**), and Pompeii (Bandinelli 1970, Plate 116; see **Figure XXI**), which show Theseus standing above the remains of the Minotaur and receiving thanks from the children of Athens.

¹³⁹ Vermeule 1957, p.297.

while his head is bent downwards to kiss the hand of his deliverer. Behind the supplicating Roman three of his countrymen are depicted. One, on the extreme right of the group, gazes down at the body of Cacus. The others direct their attention at the kiss of homage. The poses of these secondary figures serve to focus the viewer's attention on the heroic struggle just completed and the homage paid to the victor. These features, suggesting the moment of victory after the struggle, give the design a temporal quality.

The engraver's use of the medallion-flan is masterful, for he has created a striking spatial setting by his depiction of landscape elements. The carcass of Cacus is shown lying on its back, its upturned head at the foot of Hercules. Its arms appear outstretched but the left arm and the lower portion of the body are obscured from view by the pile of rocks shown to the extreme right. Large and irregular boulders are depicted, representing the ruins of Cacus' rocky lair that was torn apart by Hercules. They are arranged in a mound which rises to the upper portion of the field and follow the sweep of the medallion-flan. The gnarled trunk of a tree sits atop the pile and rises towards the apex of the flan. These various elements of the composition serve to create a sense of place in which the depicted action occurs.

Several medallions issued between A.D. 140 and 145 depict, on their reverses, the legendary conflict between Tarquin and Attus

Navius (**Plate 10.8 - 9**).¹⁴⁰ The design is a fine example of the monoscenic mode of narrative art. The medallion of this type which has not been re-touched bears the reverse legend **NAVIUS**, identifying the scene as depicting two recognizable individuals engaged in a specific legendary action. The figures are shown in a naturalistic manner, and their poses attract the viewer's attention and cause him to wonder at the nature of the action depicted. To the right of the field king Tarquin is shown standing to the front with his head turned to the left. His right hand is held out in the direction of Attus Navius who is depicted to the left, kneeling. The augur's head faces downwards, intent on the miraculous action he is performing with a razor and a whetstone. The legendary event depicted is recorded in detail by Livy:

Id quia inaugurato Romulus fecerat, negare Attus Navius, inclitus ea tempestate augur, neque mutari neque novum constitui, nisi aves addixissent, posse. Ex eo ira regi mota, eludensque artem, ut ferunt, "Age dum," inquit, "divine tu, inaugura fierine possit, quod nunc ego mente concipio." Cum ille augurio rem expertus profecto futuram dixisset, "Atqui hoc animo agitavi," inquit, "te novacula cotem discissurum; cape haec et perage

¹⁴⁰ Gnechi 1912, Tav.46.3 - 4, and Vol.II, p.13, Number 33, notes that the example held in Naples (here reproduced as **Plate 10.9**) shows signs of general re-tooling and alterations to its legend. See also Banti 1984, Number 244.

quod aves tuae fieri posse portendunt." Tum illum
haud cunctanter discidissem cōtem ferunt.

Book I. xxxvi. 3 - 5

The close connection between the written tradition of this legendary event, as it survives in Livy, and the medallion-type is evident. Indeed it may even be argued that the design is illustrative of the surviving textual source. Such close parallels between a medallion-type and a written source have already been noted in the case of the Hadrianic 'Aeneid' medallion-type, which appears to have been based on the tradition of Vergil. The NAVIUS type is clearly dependent on the viewer's ability to recall the external reference of the written or oral tradition in order to understand the full significance of the action shown. While the scene itself is lacking in violent physical action, the die-engraver has depicted a critical moment of Rome's legendary past.

The symbolic significance of the event for Roman religious practice is attested by Livy:

Auguriis certe sacerdotioque augurum tantus
honus accessit ut nihil belli domique postea
nisi auspicato gereretur, concilia populi,
exercitus vocati, summa rerum, ubi aves non
admisissent, dirimerentur.

Book I. xxxvi. 6

For the citizens of Antonine Rome the type was truly "... ut esset ad posteros miraculi eius monumentum".¹⁴¹ It captured the critical moment of a legendary scene which had deep significance as proof of the importance of auspices and omens, practices central to Roman religious rites. Such a theme was, of course, well suited to the general aims of the 'programme series'.

Many of the narrative qualities of the **NAVIUS** medallion-type are paralleled on another medallion of the series bearing the legend **COCLES** in the upper region of the field (Plate 11.1).¹⁴² This legend immediately calls to mind the exploits of the Roman hero Horatius Cocles, whose action were recorded by Livy:

... pons sublicius iter paene hostibus dedit, ni
unus vir fuisset, Horatius Cocles; id munimentum
illo die fortuna urbis Romanae habuit.... Itaque
monere, praedicere ut pontem ferro, igni, quacum-
que vi possint, interrumpant: se impetum hostium,
quantum corpore uno posset obsisti, excepturum.
Vadit inde in primum aditum pontis, insignisque
inter conspecta cedentium pugnae terga obversis
comminus ad ineundum proelium armis ipso miraculo

¹⁴¹ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* Book I.xxxvi.5.

¹⁴² Cohen 1880, *Antonin* 127. Gneecchi 1912, Tav.43.4. Banti 1984, Number 52. Cabinet des Médailles Number 83.

audaciae obstupescit hostis.... Quae cum in
 obiecto cuncta scuto haesissent, neque ille minus
 obstinatus ingenti pontem obtineret gradu, iam
 impetu conabantur detrudere virum, cum simul
 fragor rupti pontis, simul clamor Romanorum
 alacritate perfecti operis sublatus, pavore subito
 impetum sustinuit. Tum Cocles "Tiberine pater,"
 inquit, "te sancte precor, haec arma et hunc
 militem propitio flumine accipias." Ita sic
 armatus in Tiberim desiluit multisque super-
 incidentibus telis incolumis ad suos tranavit,
 rem ausus plus famae habituram ad posteros
 quam fidei.

Book II. x. 2 - 12

The medallion-type illustrates the climax of the tale as Horatius Cocles, in full armour, plunges into the Tiber as the bridge collapses. He is shown making for the shore as the enemy hurl down weapons upon him. The medallion-engraver's use of the flan in this example is masterful. The Etruscan army is represented by two figures standing to the right. One holds his right hand aloft, aiming a spear. Balancing these warriors on the left are two standing Romans, possibly representing Spurius Lartius and Titus Herminius who, tradition holds, stayed to support Horatius in his enterprise. They face to the right and the figure in the foreground points towards the fallen bridge with his right hand. A third Roman is shown kneeling and swinging an axe at the bridge, one span of which has collapsed.

This figure represents the demolition squad who carried out the work thanks to Horatius' delaying tactics. The use of one or two figures to represent larger groups was an artistic device well suited to the limitations of the scale of the medallion- and coin-flans. Such representative figures convey a clear meaning without overcrowding the field. The juxtapositioning of the two groups who face each other, the raised spear and axe and the broken bridge between them create a sense of conflict and aggression.

The pose of the hero Horatius is quite interesting. He is depicted in the lowest portion of the flan, facing left, swimming with a sidestroke. Undulating lines suggesting waves rise to his torso and obscure the lower portion of his body. It should be noted that the act of swimming is unknown in Roman Imperial numismatic production before this time. The novelty of the action itself draws the attention of the viewer.

The **COCLES** medallion-type is both visually and psychologically stimulating. The heroic act itself, and the spirit of valour it reflects, were both in keeping with the themes of the 'programme series'. As an example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction it is significant not only for its striking similarities to a known external reference, but also for the quality of the action depicted. The scene depicted is one of vital and exciting action which attracts and holds the viewer's attention. While the scene does not transgress the principle of spatial and temporal unity, the depiction of Horatius swimming the Tiber urges the viewer to

recall his heroic stand against the Etruscans and his celebrated return to the Roman troops, and thus mentally supply events of the story not actually illustrated.

Between A.D. 140 and 143 a reverse type bearing the legend **AESCULAPIUS** and combined with several different obverse types was struck on medallions issued by the imperial Mint of Rome (Plate 11.2 - 4(a) - (b)).¹⁴³ The design reflects the medallion-engraver's acute interest in depicting an intricate and visually stimulating spatial setting. Various elements of landscape including architectural and natural features are depicted. The design shows a large architectural feature to the left consisting of three piers which appear to support a heavy entablature. Between the piers of the left hand arch the front half of a ship is visible, manned by a human figure.¹⁴⁴ From the prow of the ship a large coiled serpent springs to the right towards a landscape setting. Three architectural

¹⁴³ The **AESCULAPIUS** design was combined with, (a) an obverse-type showing a portrait of Antoninus Pius facing right, with the legend **ANTONINUS AUG PIUS P P TR P COS III IMP II** (Gnecchi 1912, Tav.43.1, and Cabinet des Médailles, Number 82; see Plate 11.2), (b) an obverse-type with a portrait of Antoninus Pius facing left (Gnecchi 1912, Tav.43.2; see Plate 11.3), and (c) an obverse-type of Antoninus Pius facing right, bearing the legend **ANTONINUS AUG PIUS P P TR P COS III**. On the latter the tower in the background is shown to be topped by turrets. A line-drawing of this example reproduced by Froechner 1878, p.53, and Cohen 1880, *Antonin* 18 (see Plate 11.4(a)) shows these turrets, but not the human figure in the first arch, nor the second arch. Cohen 1880, p.272, notes the piece reproduced by the line-drawing to be held in Paris (also see Gnecchi 1912, Vol.II, p.9, Number 2). Personal observation of the same medallion held at the Cabinet des Médailles, Number 81 (see Plate 11.4(b)) suggests the omission of the figure and second arch on the line-drawing to be erroneous. Also see Banti 1984, Numbers 5 - 7.

¹⁴⁴ See above, Note 143.

structures are shown in the upper-right region, one of which, a tall tower with a flat roof and square window, is shown with an accompanying tree which branches towards the left. These various elements of the landscape rest on a large mound of boulders and rocks. Below the river god Tiberinus is depicted reclining to the right. He faces to the left and holds his right hand out in a gesture of welcome to the serpent. His lower body is obscured by finely engraved sinuous lines, representing waves, which stretch across the lower portion of the flans.

Modern interpretations of this medallion-type have varied greatly. Dressel, for example, argues that the arched structure is a navale, with a ship at rest in its dock, and that the landscape features depicted represent the Aventine.¹⁴⁵ Van Buren, following Petersen and Richter, has rejected this interpretation.¹⁴⁶ He convincingly argues that the structure to the left is, indeed, a bridge spanning the Tiber river, and that the boat is depicted in motion. He also notes that the landscape elements of buildings, rocks and tree depicted on the design are similar to those of the idyllic scenery shown on a stucco relief from the Villa Farnesina (**Figure XXII**),¹⁴⁷ and that both depictions are part of "... the traditional landscape motives of

¹⁴⁵ Van Buren 1911, p.188, reports Dressel's view as expressed in ZfN XXII (1900), pp.32 - 36.

¹⁴⁶ Van Buren 1911, p.188.

¹⁴⁷ Mielsch 1975, Tafel 3.

Graeco-Roman art."¹⁴⁸ He argues that, in the case of the medallion-type, these elements specifically represent the Insula Tiberina. Van Buren also suggests that Tiberinus is depicted at a point where the stream flows beneath the overhang of the bank of the Insula Tiberina, and that from his position we can interpret the ship as coming upstream towards the island.¹⁴⁹

On the basis of Van Buren's interpretation of the design, the scene depicted on this medallion-type may be seen to illustrate the story described in the Periocha of Livy, Book XI:

Cum pestilentia civitas laboraret, missi legati ut
Aesculapi signum Romam ab Epidauro transferrent,
anguem, qui se in navem contulerat, in quo
ipsum numen esse constabat, deportaverunt; eoque
in insulam Tiberis egresso eodem loco aedis
Aesculapio constituta est.¹⁵⁰

The poet Ovid gives more details of the landing of the serpent. In his Metamorphoses¹⁵¹ he tells how the snake, looking from the mast-top, spied the island and, choosing it as a suitable dwelling place,

¹⁴⁸ Van Buren 1911, p.189.

¹⁴⁹ Van Buren 1911, p.192.

¹⁵⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita.

¹⁵¹ Ovid, Metamorphoses Book XV.730f.

landed and assumed residence. The medallion-type is an illustration of the episode described by Livy and Ovid.

The depiction of the personification of the Tiber river, while not noted in the literary accounts, is in keeping with Roman artistic conventions. On Trajan's column, for example, the god Danuvius is shown watching the armies of the emperor cross a bridge.¹⁵² The inclusion of such deities in a depiction serves symbolic purposes, aiding in establishing the specific place represented, and elevating the significance of the action depicted to the divine plane.¹⁵³

From the narrative point of view the type is significant. It illustrates a specific legendary event involving a recognizable creature, the serpent of Aesculapius. Furthermore the action shown is dramatic and depicted within a visually stimulating landscape setting. The action of the springing serpent captures the viewer's immediate attention, as the dramatic leap occupies the centre of the medallion-flan. The snake's curved body serves to unite the bridge and boat at the left with the features of the Insula Tiberina on the right. The various architectural and landscape features such as the

¹⁵² Gauer 1977, Tafel 5b. Szene III.

¹⁵³ A relief panel from the Palazzo Rondanini depicting the arrival of the sacred serpent of Aesculapius, as noted by Toynbee 1944, p.222, offers some points of comparison with the medallion-type (Strong 1923, p.243 Figure 148; see **Figure XXIII**). On the relief architectural features are depicted in the upper part of the panel and Tiberinus is facing in the same direction as his representation on the medallion-type. While his right hand is extended, water, flowing from a vessel in the upper area of the panel, falls into his hand. The serpent is shown moving towards the flowing water from the right of the panel.

tree, rocks, water and even Tiberinus himself all serve to create a specific setting and a vivid sense of spatial depth.

III - Numismatic Types of the 'Programme Series'

Struck Posthumously for Faustina the Elder

In the three years following her death and deification in A.D. 141, four mythological medallion-types were issued in the name of **DIVA AUGUSTA FAUSTINA** at the Mint of Rome. These medallion-types depict Claudia Quinta dragging Cybele's ship to land, Mars descending to Rhea Silvia, the rape of the Sabine women, and the Sabine women intervening in the conflict between the Sabines and the Romans. The Mars and Rhea Silvia type was also used on coins of the 'everyday' issue. As befits the posthumous striking for an empress, women play a leading role in the action depicted in each of these scenes. In later writings Toynbee has grouped these mythological types with those of Antoninus Pius as part of the 'programme series' for they all relate episodes significant in the legendary founding and early development of the city of Rome.¹⁵⁴

A medallion-type struck for Faustina I depicts the legendary action of the Vestal Virgin Claudia Quinta who is reported to have dragged a vessel carrying the image of Cybele to shore in 205/4

¹⁵⁴ Toynbee 1942, p.45, and Toynbee 1944, p.143.

B.C.¹⁵⁵ (Plate 11.5).¹⁵⁶ The story of Claudia Quinta illustrated by this type is told by Livy¹⁵⁷ and Ovid.¹⁵⁸ The latter, in his Fasti, gives details of the services rendered by the Vestal Virgin. He tells how the vessel carrying the image became lodged in the river shallows.¹⁵⁹ The poet goes on to relate that, after calling on the goddess to prove her chastity by giving her the strength to drag the boat ashore:

dixit et exiguo funem conamine traxit
(mira, sed et scaena testificata loquar):
mota dea est sequiturque ducem laudatque sequendo:
index laetitiae fertur ad astra sonus.

Fasti IV. 325 - 328

The 'Claudia Quinta' medallion-type is a fine example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction, illustrating a specific individual engaged in a legendary event known to us from Ovid and Livy. The upper field has been left vacant, while the lower portion

¹⁵⁵ See Stuart-Jones 1912, p.182.

¹⁵⁶ Strack 1937, Teil III, Tav.XXI.691, Cabinet des Médailles, Number 141. The subject of the Vestal Virgin's pious actions was also celebrated on an Altar of the Mater Deum dedicated by Claudia Syntyche; see Stuart-Jones 1912, pp.181 - 182, and Plate 43.109b.

¹⁵⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book I.xxix.14.

¹⁵⁸ Ovid, Fasti IV.297 - 302.

¹⁵⁹ Ovid, Fasti IV.297 - 302.

of the flan is full of fine detail, compositional balance, and a variety of textures and objects ranging from fire and water to drapery, flesh and wood. On the left the front section of a boat is shown with a curved prow and several oars. The image of the goddess Cybele sits on a throne decorated with the carved relief of a lion on its side, resting on the deck. On the right of the flan four figures are depicted. This group compositionally balances the mass of the goddess Cybele and the vessel in which she sails. The figure of Claudia Quinta dominates the group. She is shown from a three-quarter view perspective with her body leaning towards the right. Her head is turned to the left to face the image of the goddess and her right hand appears extended towards the prow of the ship which she is dragging to shore. Her body is covered with thick, heavy folds of drapery. Over Claudia's right shoulder the head and outstretched arm of an onlooker are shown. To the right two other figures are shown, one facing towards the viewer, holding high a torch, the other turned to watch the actions of the Vestal Virgin. Above these figures two objects, probably representing torches, are depicted. Like the trumpet and banners depicted on the **SABINAE** medallion-type discussed below, this uplifted torch helps to create a sense of space and depth above the figures' heads. The lower region of the medallion-flan is occupied by sinuous lines representing water which serve to fill this area and give the scene an aquatic setting.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ In its depiction of water the design may be compared with the 'Landing of Aeneas in Latium', **COCLES** and **AESCULAPIUS** medallion-types of the 'Programme Series' (see Plates 10.6, 11.1 - 4(b)). With the exception of these types, and some niketerion- and contorniate-types, the depiction of water was extremely rare in Imperial numismatic production. The spatial setting of each of
(Continued. ...

The overall effect of these features is to engage the viewer's attention and invoke an emotional response to the Vestal's pious task.¹⁶¹

The surviving example of the Mars and Rhea Silvia medallion-type of Diva Faustina is worn (Plate 11.6).¹⁶² As an example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction this medallion-type exhibits several significant features. The die-engraver's use of landscape elements such as the tree trunks, grotto and the personification of the Tiber create a staged setting. The design creates some sense of psychological tension in the viewer's mind as the die-maker has captured a moment of stillness and quiet just before Mars' violent act of rape, an act that is to have great consequences. The rape of Rhea Silvia had, in the Aeneid, been foretold by Jupiter to Venus:

...donec regina sacerdos

Marte gravis geminam partu dabit Ilia prolem.

Book I. 273 - 274

these stories clearly called for water to be represented, and in each case the die-engraver has done so by the use of sinuous lines. While these features are not very clear on some of the surviving examples due to wear, they reflect the die-engravers' desire to create spatial settings for scenes of specific action.

¹⁶¹ In addition to being a narrative work depicting a specific legendary event, the 'Claudia Quinta' medallion-type may well have served to symbolize the virtues of chastity and piety. Furthermore Mattingly (BMCRE IV, p.xcvii), argues that "The story of the Vestal Claudia drawing the ship of Cybele is linked on the one side to the antiquarian types of Antoninus, on the other to Faustina, devotee both of Vesta and Cybele."

¹⁶² Gnechi 1912, Tav.57.3. LIMC II, Mars p.551, n.404, and Melville Jones 1990, p.271.

The scene of Mars and Rhea Silvia,¹⁶³ the parents of Romulus and Remus, 'fills in the story' of the legendary history of Rome's origins and bridges the scenes of Aeneas and Ascanius, and Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf previously shown on medallions of the 'programme series'. The figures of Mars and Rhea Silvia on the medallion-type are depicted in interesting poses. The god Mars appears to the extreme left. He is standing upright and appears to hold a shield and spear in his arm, while his right hand rests on a tree trunk. The figure of the reclining Vestal Virgin is shown to the right. Cohen¹⁶⁴ and Gneecchi¹⁶⁵ describe her as reclining on the breast of the Tiber, leaning on an overturned urn at the entrance to a cave, above which is a tree.

The subject of Mars visiting Rhea Silvia is also found on issues of the regular coinage of the period. For example an aureus-type of Antoninus Pius depicts a similar scene (Plate 11.7).¹⁶⁶ This coin-

¹⁶³ The Vestal Virgin Aemilia, who is identified with Rhea Silvia by Plutarch (Romulus 11.3), had been celebrated on two coin-types issued during the Republic. In 66 B.C. the moneyer M. Aemilius Lepidus issued a denarius-type depicting Aemilia on its obverse (CRR, Number 833), and in 42 B.C. the moneyer L. Livineius Regulus issued an aureus-type showing, on its reverse, the veiled figure of Aemilia holding a sceptre and simpulum (CRR, Number 1105). In these Republican examples no narrative features can be detected, the figure or bust of the Vestal being simply depicted.

¹⁶⁴ Cohen 1880, Vol.II Faustine Mère p.436, Number 295.

¹⁶⁵ Gneecchi 1912, p.24.

¹⁶⁶ BMCRE IV, Antoninus Pius Number 253. LIMC II, Mars p.551, n.403, and Hill 1970, p.184, n.260.

type depicts Mars carrying a spear and circular shield advancing, in an upright pose, towards the figure of Rhea Silvia. She is shown reclining to the right with her right arm supporting her head and her left leaning on an object, possibly a stone. An as struck in A.D. 140 shows a slightly different arrangement in the poses of the figures (Plate 11.8).¹⁶⁷ On this type the god Mars is depicted higher in the field. His legs are parted, not in a walking position but one that suggests that he is about to alight on the ground. The visual suggestion that he is in flight is further enhanced by the fact that his drapery floats and swirls around his legs. His body is also shown at a slightly inclined angle. This indication of motion adds to the psychological drama of the scene by heightening the viewer's anticipation of the violent act of rape to follow. The figure of the Vestal Virgin Rhea Silvia is also depicted with greater visual credence on this type. Her right leg is slightly raised, balancing her raised right arm, while her left leg and arm are bent to support her weight. The curve of her body closely follows that of the flan and rests on a semi-circular ground-line.

The motif of Mars descending towards the slumbering figure of Rhea Silvia is also known from a number of surviving examples of Roman art including the Mattei Sarcophagus (Figure XXIV),¹⁶⁸ a relief panel now housed in the Vatican Belvedere (Figure

¹⁶⁷ Kent 1978, Plate 92 Number 316. *LIMC* II, *Mars* p.551, n.403. Hill 1970, p.185, n.292.

¹⁶⁸ Robert 1904, Plates 60 - 61.

XXV)¹⁶⁹ and a wall-painting from the Domus M. Fabi Secundi (Figure XXVI).¹⁷⁰ The Mattei Sarcophagus shows Mars in an attitude very similar to that of the aureus-types, and Rhea Silvia is similarly shown naked to the waist. The sarcophagus relief is, however, densely populated with subsidiary figures. The relief panel shows Mars to the right and Rhea Silvia to the left, and while the wallpainting shows Mars to the left (his position on the Antonine numismatic types), it places the figures in the background of a landscape which depicts other episodes of the story of Rome's origins in the middle and foreground. Vermeule has suggested that the motif used on the numismatic pieces in question may have been directly inspired by a work of monumental relief and notes that a relief fragment from the pediment sculpture of the Temple of Venus Felix and Roma Aeterna appears to show Mars' visit to Rhea Silvia.¹⁷¹ Variations in the details of the poses of both Mars and Rhea noted between the various numismatic depictions would suggest that if the die-engravers were so inspired by a prototype in another artistic medium, they introduced subtle changes into their representations of the figures and did not simply reproduce them.

A medallion issued in the name of Diva Augusta Faustina and bearing the reverse legend SABINAE depicts a legendary event, the

¹⁶⁹ Vermeule 1957, p.294 Figure 8.

¹⁷⁰ Dawson 1944, Plate XVII.

¹⁷¹ Vermeule 1957, p.293, and Vermeule 1955, Figure 4. Also see Platner and Ashby 1929, p.554.

rape of the Sabine women (**Plate 11.9**).¹⁷² The die-engraver of this type has added architectural elements which identify the specific setting of the depicted action. The centre of the medallion-flan is dominated by a representation of the metae which stood at the end of the circus spina. Shown from a frontal-view perspective, the base of the meta closest to the viewer obscures the bases of the other two. Their tapering tops, fitted with orbs are, however, shown on either side of the central meta. The depiction of these structures identifies the scene of the action depicted as being within the circus where the Consualia in honour of Neptunus Equester was celebrated under Romulus' direction.¹⁷³

Livy relates the moment of the Romans' attack on their Sabine guests:

Ubi spectaculi tempus venit
deditaeque eo mentes cum oculis erant, tum ex com-
posito orta vis, signoque dato iuventus Romana ad
rapiendas virgines discurrit.

Book I. ix. 10

¹⁷² Toynbee 1942, Plate VI.2, and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 258.6. The subject of the rape of the Sabines was celebrated by the moneyer Lucius Titurius Sabinus on a denarius-type issued in 89/88 B.C. (**Plate 1.7**). The medallion in question owes nothing artistically to that schematic representation of the deed, however the reverse-design of this medallion-type was later copied and issued by Constantius II (see Chapter Six.D, pp.215 - 218 and **Plate 16.9 - 11** and on the reverses of contorniates (see Chapter Seven.A, pp.223 - 224 and **Plate 17.1 - 4**).

¹⁷³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book I.ix.6 - 7.

On the medallion-type this specific legendary event is represented by nine figures. Four figures stand to the left and five to the right, divided by the rising metae of the centre of the flan. Thus the design is compositionally divided into two distinct halves, the two groups balanced by the use of dominant figures and tense poses. The medallion-engraver has also created a sense of spatial depth in his design by the use of overlapping planes of relief, as some figures in the foreground obscure those behind. The dominating figure to the left is shown from a frontal view, with his head turned to the right. This figure largely obscures from view the three other figures shown in this section of the flan. On the extreme right, in the foreground, a female dressed in a long robe is led away by her right arm by another figure. The woman partly obscures from view the left-hand side of a larger figure who is shown frontally, with his head turned to the left. The heads of two other figures are to be observed over this figure's shoulders. The pose of this figure and that which dominates the left-hand group are noteworthy. They are both shown in frontal view, with their heads turned to the centre and their bodies leaning towards the left and righthand sweeps of the flan respectively. The visual effect of this juxta-position of the two figures and their mutually fixed gaze is to create a sense of dynamic tension. This composition serves not only to highlight the physical nature of the event, but also reflects the underlying emotional tension

of the Rape. The viewer is drawn into the scene by these compositional features.¹⁷⁴

A further medallion bearing the obverse legend **DIVA AUGUSTA FAUSTINA** and the reverse legend **SABINAE**¹⁷⁵ depicts, on its reverse, a scene of the Sabine women intervening in the battle between their Roman husbands and Sabine fathers (Plate 11.10).¹⁷⁶ Whereas the die-engraver of the **COCLES** medallion-type issued by Antoninus Pius chose to represent the two opposing forces by showing one or two figures (Plate 10.4), the engraver of this **SABINAE** type shows six warriors to the right of the field opposing five warriors to the left. Between the two forces three women can be seen, two of whom carry children.

This medallion-type, a fine example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction, illustrates a specific legendary event recorded by Livy:

Tum Sabinae mulieres, quarum ex iniuria
bellum ortum erat, crinibus passis scissaque veste

¹⁷⁴ It has been suggested by Horvat 1928, that the **SABINAE** types of Faustina I has a special 'Tendenz' of their own, and that they represented part of an attempt to revive the ancient custom whereby Roman youths 'raped' their fiancées from their mothers' arms on the eve of their marriage. See Toynbee 1942, p.45.

¹⁷⁵ Toynbee 1944, p.194. The reverse legend reads **SABINAE**, not **AETERNIT** as described by Cohen 1880, Vol.II *Faustine Mère* p.418, Number 60, and Gnechi 1912, p.24. Also see *BMCRE* IV, p.xcvii.

¹⁷⁶ Gnechi 1912, Tav.56.6, and Cabinet des Médailles Number 143.

victo malis muliebri pavore, ausae se inter tela volantia inferre, ex transverso impetu facto dirimere infestas acies, dirimere iras, hinc patres hinc viros orantes ne se sanguine nefando soceri generique respergerent, ne parricidio macularent partus suos, nepotum illi, hi liberum progeniem.

Book I. xiii. 1 - 2

The complexities of poses and the array of accoutrements of war which can be seen on this medallion stimulate the eye and mind. The die-engraver's use of overlapping planes of relief whereby figures are obscured from view by objects in the foreground also serve to add a degree of spatial depth to the design.

The group of combatants to the right is dominated by an imposing figure advancing to the left, wearing a helmet and holding forth a large shield. Clearly he is to be seen as the leader of the band. To his right three soldiers, two carrying shields, are depicted and behind them the helmeted heads of two other figures are visible.

The group to the left of the flan is dominated by a leading figure. His legs and torso face the viewer while his helmeted head is turned sharply to the right to face his foes. His extended right arm holds an angled spear and his left a large round shield. His body leans back, as if in reaction to the threat posed by the advance of the dominant figure on the right. His outflung right arm and readied

spear largely obscure the bodies of two helmeted warriors on the left. To the right of the central figure of the group the helmeted heads of two other warriors are shown, their bodies being obscured from view by his shield.

Between the two opposing forces the figures of women and children are depicted. Their position in the centre of the flan, and the fact that they are in higher relief than the subsidiary figures to either side of them attracts attention to their actions. One of the women, running to the right, appears to turn her head to face the dominant figure of the left-hand group. In the centre a second woman, also running to the right, holds forth an infant whose outstretched hands present an emotional appeal to the dominant figure to the right. A third female is depicted, crouching as if attempting to sweep up a larger child and remove it from the threat of physical danger.

This type is significant from the artistic point of view in many respects. Firstly the flan is densely populated in what in effect is a 'human landscape' of fifteen figures depicted in a variety of poses. They serve to fill the medallion-flan and attract attention.¹⁷⁷ Secondly the manner in which the die-engraver has chosen to show these figures by the use of overlapping planes of relief whereby

¹⁷⁷ Such a dense population of figures is most unusual within the flan of a numismatic piece, and this may suggest that the type was copied from a relief work, where such complex scenes are common.

figures in the foreground obscure from view parts of those figures which stand behind them, creates the visual illusion of three planes of spatial depth within the confines of the medallion-flan. Furthermore a sense of space and depth is enhanced by the depiction of a trumpet and various banners of war above the figures' heads. These objects create the illusion of air and space above the figures in much the same manner as the trumpets, banners and great candlestick depicted on the 'Soldiers Carrying Booty' panel of the Arch of Titus.¹⁷⁸

Compositionally the employment of relief planes is also significant. The subsidiary soldiers to left and right are shown in lowest relief, the dominant figure of each in highest relief, and the central group, comprising the women and children, is on a plane between these two extremes. The effect of this complex use of planes is to draw the eye first to focus attention on the action and reaction of the group leaders, then onto the reactions of the women and children, and lastly onto the less significant soldiers on both sides.

From the narrative point of view this representation of a specific legendary event is masterful. Not only is the viewer stimulated by the physical threat of the advancing right-hand leader and corresponding re-action of left-hand leader who leans back away from him, but also one is captivated by the responses of the women

¹⁷⁸ Bandinelli 1969, Plate 238.

and their infants: the hurried glance, the piteous outstretched hands of the baby, the urgency with which a mother attempts to protect her child. An emotional tension is created in the mind of the beholder: pity and anguish for the fate of the innocent competes with interest in the physical conflict. Judged by the degree of the emotional response invoked by this design, the medallion-type is an outstanding example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction rarely, if ever equalled in the history of numismatic production from ancient Rome.¹⁷⁹

IV - Medallions of the 'Programme Series' Struck by Antoninus Pius During the Period of His Fourth Consulship

Toynbee also includes a medallion bearing the obverse legend **ANTONINUS AUG PIUS PP TR P** and the reverse legend **COS IIII**, dated circa A.D. 145 and depicting the traditional 'She-wolf

¹⁷⁹ Weigel 1984, p.190, notes a non-narrative coin-type which is thematically related to this **SABINAE** type. "Antoninus Pius struck another 'Romulus-type' through the issue of an aureus and a sestertius depicting Jupiter Stator. This god had come to Rome's defense when summoned by Romulus in a battle with the Sabines in the area between the Palatine and Capitoline hills. Jupiter intervened and stopped the flight of the Roman soldiers, thus turning the tide of battle. This occurred just before the incident of the Sabine women intervening between husbands and fathers. The merging of Sabines and the Romans into one people thus results partially from Jupiter Stator's action and in part from the valor of the Sabine women, a scene which has been commemorated on one of Faustina's medallions." For examples of the coin-types referred to, see **BMCRE IV**, Numbers 210, 1247, and 1687.

and Twins' motif in her catalogue of the 'programme series'.¹⁸⁰ The figures are shown beneath a grotto, an arrangement known from the coinage issued during the period of Antoninus Pius' third consulship.¹⁸¹

A worn medallion-type dating from the period of Antoninus Pius' fourth consulship depicts Hercules at the banquet given by the Potitii and Pinarii in his honour (Plates 11.11 and 12.1 (a) - (b)).¹⁸² Details of this specific legendary event are recorded by Livy,¹⁸³ Vergil¹⁸⁴ and Ovid,¹⁸⁵ and the type, a fine example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction, is illustrative of this known external reference. Within the restricted flan of the medallion the die-engraver has created a visually captivating spatial setting by showing five figures with a variety of landscape elements

¹⁸⁰ Toynbee 1942, p.45. Gneecchi 1912, p.12 Number 27. A further 'She-wolf and Twins' type is held in the Gneecchi Collection of the Museo Nazionale Romano: Tray 13, N.15, 'Medaglioni di Piombo'. The piece is very worn, and the legend may indicate a 'COS III' dating, but this is not clear. The flan is very heavy and of poor, schematic workmanship. Only the figures of the she-wolf and the twins appear on the reverse. The most noteworthy aspect of this example is the extremely high relief in which the body of the she-wolf is depicted, being some five millimetres above the surface of the field.

¹⁸¹ See Chapter Four.A, pp.71f. and Plates 6.3 and 6.6.

¹⁸² Gneecchi 1912, Vol.II, p.19 number 91, Dressel 1973, pp.56 - 57, and 26.Taf.III.3, and LIMC V, Herakles p.180 n.3503; see Plate 11.11. Gneecchi 1912, Tav.54.3. Banti 1984, Number 572; see Plate 12.1 (a). Cohen 1880, Antonin p.390, Number 1162; see Plate 12.1 (b).

¹⁸³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book I.xxxvi.6.

¹⁸⁴ Vergil, Aeneid Book VIII. 268 - 279.

¹⁸⁵ Ovid, Fasti I .579 - 586.

including a cippus or column and aedicula, table and chairs, trees, and several vases. The figures themselves, though very worn on the Antonine medallion-type, appear in a number of interesting poses. Judging from the figure of Hercules and copies of the type made during the Severan period (Plate 14.4 - 5),¹⁸⁶ the figures originally appeared naturalistic representations of the human figure.

Hercules is shown sitting to the right of the field, resting his club, which is held in his left hand, on the ground-line. He appears robust and well muscled. Because he is depicted on a larger scale than the other human figures shown he dominates the design.¹⁸⁷ The remaining human figures are shown in a variety of poses. One, sitting to the right of the hero, is largely obscured by the figure of Hercules, and only his upper torso, head and extended right arm are visible. This figure seated at the table with Hercules probably represents one of his hosts. The three remaining figures are depicted on the left hand side, facing to the right. Identification of the figures other than Hercules, whose club makes him easily recognizable, is most difficult given the worn condition of the flan. Gneecchi, following Cohen,¹⁸⁸ describes the scene in part as showing "Ercole colla clava seduto a tavola, a sinistra, tra Pinario e Potizio con alcuni

¹⁸⁶ See Chapter Five.C, pp.188 - 191.

¹⁸⁷ The artistic device of depicting the central character on a larger scale in order to draw the viewer's attention to him and emphasize his importance has been noted on other Imperial medallion-types, for example see Plates 4.7, 5.1, 7.1 - 3, and 10.6(a) - (b), .7.

¹⁸⁸ Cohen 1880, Vol.II Antonin p.391.

schiavi che servono."¹⁸⁹ The kneeling figure in the foreground of the left-hand group appears to be holding a large object, perhaps an amphora, while two other figures directly behind it appear to be standing. In the lower portion of the flan a small table is shown which separates the three attendants on the left from the figure of Hercules and the host on the right.

Various elements of landscape are depicted, such as a tall cippus or column topped by a vase, and two trees occupying the extreme right and left of the flan and serving to frame the scene.¹⁹⁰ A large architectural feature is also depicted in the upper region of the field.¹⁹¹ These features serve the function of providing a spatial setting in which the actions of the various figures are shown to take place.

While the fact that the die-cutter of this type has been able to include such a multitude of elements on the restricted flan of the medallion is testimony to his technical skills as a miniature engraver, the artistic qualities of his design should not be over-looked. One of the most striking features of the design, evident even on the worn specimens which have survived, is the sense of spatial depth achieved

¹⁸⁹ Gnechi 1912, p.19. Also see Dressel 1973, pp.56 - 57.

¹⁹⁰ The trees are identified as vinestocks by Cohen 1880, Vol.II Antonin p.391, and Gnechi 1912, p.19.

¹⁹¹ While on the medallions in question this feature is very worn, it appears more distinctly on Severan copies of the type and has been identified as a festooned aedicula. See Chapter Five.C, pp.188 - 191, and **Plate 14.4 - 5**.

by the die-engraver by the use of overlapping planes. On the left hand side the figures are shown on three planes, with the foremost bodies obscuring from view details of the figures behind. Similarly the body of Hercules on the right blocks from view the lower portions of the figure seated to his right. This use of overlap is applied to elements of the setting, where the vase sitting on the ground-line to the left obscures from view the base of the cippus behind it. The plane of relief closest to the viewer is raised above the rest of the surface so that the figures of Hercules, the kneeling attendant, and the table, aedicula, and amphora actually appear partly in the round. The effects of light and shadow falling across the face of the medallion are therefore heightened and these serve to increase an illusion of depth. The overall effect of these artistic devices, aided by the use of diminution,¹⁹² is to create a convincing visual illusion of spatial depth within the extremely low relief of the medallion-flan.

The scene represented on this medallion followed Hercules' encounter with the monster Cacus. According to Livy¹⁹³ and Ovid,¹⁹⁴ Hercules was questioned after killing the monster by Evander who recognized him as the son of Jupiter and, following his

¹⁹² The figure in the foreground at the left is shown on a larger scale than that directly behind him, and in turn that figure is proportionally larger than the one which stands in the background behind the table. Thus the die-engraver has used diminishing sizes to suggest that the figures occupy receding planes.

¹⁹³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book I.vii.9.

¹⁹⁴ Ovid, Fasti I. 579 - 586.

mother's prophetic instructions, established an altar to Hercules. Livy records that the Potitii and Pinarii were chosen to host the celebrations which followed:

Ibi tum primum bove
eximia capta de grege sacrum Herculi adhibitis ad
ministerium dapemque Potitiis ac Pinariis, quae
tum familiae maxime inclitae ea loca incolebant,
factum. Forte ita evenit, ut Potitii ad tempus praesto
essent iisque exta apponerentur, Pinarii extis adesis
ad ceteram venirent dapem.

Book I vii. 12 - 13

Details of the banquet are also given by Vergil in the Aeneid.¹⁹⁵ The significance of this quiet and domestic scene, so unlike the exploits of his labours and encounters with monsters such as Cacus and Nessus, is that it represents the first occasion on which Hercules was heralded as a god and sacrifice made to him. That this event took place on the site of the future city of Rome highlights the type's thematic links to other types of the 'programme series'.

¹⁹⁵ Vergil, Aeneid Book VIII. 268 - 279.

V - Medallions of the 'Programme Series' Struck in the Name of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar

Medallions struck for Marcus Aurelius as Caesar in A.D. 145 - 146 depict, on their reverses, a sacrificial scene (**Plate 12.2 - 3**).¹⁹⁶ The composition is very similar to a number of Vota Publica types depicted on the Imperial coinage and medallions, and it clearly belongs to the canon of state sacrificial scenes.¹⁹⁷ The design shows, in part, two attendants to the left dressed in tunics. One, in the foreground, bends towards the right to take hold of the sacrificial sow while the second, shown behind the altar, holds out an offertory bowl. In the background a Corinthian-style temple is depicted. Four tall columns rise to support a pediment whose upper portions are cut off by the sweep of the field, an interesting use of the technique of border denial.¹⁹⁸

The die-engraver of this type has created an exceptional illusion of spatial depth by the use of over-lapping planes of relief.¹⁹⁹ In

¹⁹⁶ Gneecchi 1912, Tav.66.6, and Dressel 1973, 33.Taf.V.4. Also see LIMC II, Askanios p.861, n.15; see **Plate 12.2**. Pond Rothman 1978, Plate 21.13, and Jacques Schulman Auctioneers 1974, Number 1751; see **Plate 12.3**.

¹⁹⁷ Ryberg 1955, pp.183 - 184. Also see Dressel 1973, pp.65 - 69.

¹⁹⁸ For discussion of the so-called techniques of 'border denial' see Hurwit 1977, pp.5 - 17. Similar examples of the die-artist 'thinking' beyond the limits of the circular frame of the flan are can be identified on the pieces here represented by **Plates 10.6(a) - (b)** and **11.2 - 5**.

¹⁹⁹ This artistic device, as noted above, was also employed to great effect by the die-engraver of the 'Hercules and the Potitii and Pinarii' type. See **Plates 11.11** and **12.1(a) - (b)**.

the case of this sacrificial scene five planes of relief are used. The body of the sacrificial victim, in the extreme foreground, obscures from view the legs of the attendant holding her. Behind these figures the altar is shown in three-quarter view perspective and it in turn obscures the lower portion of the second attendant's body. Finally the bases and lower sections of the two columns to the left of the field are hidden from view by the attendants' bodies.

While the features noted thus far are in the tradition of the Imperial Vota Publica types, the two figures on the right identify this scene as a specific legendary event. On the extreme right a small figure appears dressed in a tunic, wearing a Phrygian cap and holding a pedum in his right hand. These accoutrements identify the figure as Ascanius. The figure to the left of the boy dominates the design. He is depicted on a much larger scale than the attendants and the youth, and is shown standing to the left, holding a sacrificial instrument over the altar. The presence of Ascanius and the offertory sow prove this figure to be Aeneas.

The depiction of Aeneas, Ascanius and the Great Sow suggests that this scene of sacrifice may be interpreted as Aeneas' specific offering to Juno mentioned by Vergil:

Ecce autem subitum atque oculis mirabile monstrum,
candida per silvam cum fetu concolor albo
procubuit viridique in litore conspicitur sus.

quam pius Aeneas tibi enim, tibi, maxima Iuno,
mactat sacra ferens et cum grege sistit ad aram.

Aeneid Book VIII. 81 - 85

This medallion-type can be considered to be an example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction for it shows identifiable individuals engaged in a specific action known from an external reference. Toynbee²⁰⁰ and Garzetti²⁰¹ have gone so far as to suggest that the scene may have a wider symbolic meaning and interpret it as showing Antoninus, in the guise of Aeneas, accompanied by Marcus Aurelius, who is shown as Ascanius, making the sacrifice. The assumption of a heroic guise by an emperor is not unknown. The coinage and medallions of Commodus, for example, often depict him wearing Hercules' lion-skin.²⁰²

This medallion-type is similar in many respects to the Aeneas panel of the Ara Pacis of Augustus (Figure XXVII).²⁰³ Ryberg argues that the various discrepancies in pose, composition and

²⁰⁰ Toynbee 1942, p.45, and Toynbee 1944, p.217.

²⁰¹ Garzetti 1974, p.467. Also see Pond Rothman 1978, p.115, Dressel 1973, pp.65 - 69, and Jacques Schulman Auctioneers, 1974, p.85.

²⁰² See Chapter Five.B, p.179.

²⁰³ Strong 1923, Tav.VII. Also see Pond Rothman 1978, p.115, and Dressel 1973, pp.65 - 69.

drapery between the Ara Pacis panel and the medallion-type can be explained as the die-engraver's desire to depict the legendary sacrifice of Aeneas, as shown on the Ara Pacis, within the established numismatic tradition of the Vota Publica types²⁰⁴ and earlier Antonine depictions of Aeneas and Ascanius (Plate 10.2 - 6(b)). If the Aeneas panel of the Ara Pacis served as a prototype for this medallion-type, the die-engraver may be judged to have adapted successfully the monumental sculptural scene to the miniature field of the medallion-flan, creating a visually stimulating and credible representation of the specific legendary action.

A second medallion-type of the 'programme series' issued by Marcus Aurelius as Caesar survives as a framed medallion (Plate 12.4).²⁰⁵ It should be noted, however, that the medallion's authenticity has been questioned.²⁰⁶ If genuine it is likely to have been struck in A.D. 147. The reverse depicts the triumph of Hercules over the monster Cacus, a specific legendary event known from Vergil,²⁰⁷ Livy²⁰⁸ and Ovid,²⁰⁹ and celebrated on a

²⁰⁴ Ryberg 1955, pp.183 - 184.

²⁰⁵ Gnechi 1912, Tav.64.2. LIMC II, Cacus p.177, n.2.

²⁰⁶ Toynbee 1942, p.45 notes the medallion to be "... of doubtful, though possible antiquity."

²⁰⁷ Vergil, Aeneid Book VIII.185 - 280.

²⁰⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book I.vii 3 - 15.

²⁰⁹ Ovid, Fasti I.543 - 586.

medallion-type of Antoninus Pius struck during the period of his third consulship (Plate 10.7). The similarities between these two types have caused Vermeule to speculate on the possibility that "... these two closely allied compositions derive from parallel works in painting or relief which either copy each other or a common source."²¹⁰

The figure of Hercules dominates the design, and his pose suggests that a painting or relief may have served as a model for the die-engraver.²¹¹ Whether directly inspired by a work in another artistic medium or not, the die-engraver has created a naturalistic and organic representation of the figure of Hercules. Details of his pose are both visually captivating and credible. He is shown in the centre, naked and facing to the left, in a pose similar to that of the medallion-type depicting the same subject issued in the name of Antoninus Pius (Plate 10.7). In this example, however, his left arm is bent and his wrist rests on his hip. Vermeule observes that in his left hand two of the apples of the Hesperides are shown.²¹² His left leg and torso appear to be shown from a three-quarter view perspective, while his right leg and head are shown in profile. Hercules' club, which appears on Antoninus Pius' type as a slender and well shaped weapon, is represented on this type as a huge mass,

²¹⁰ Vermeule 1957, p.298.

²¹¹ Vermeule 1957, p.297.

²¹² Vermeule 1957, p.297.

almost resembling an unworked tree trunk on which the hero rests his right arm. The figure appears robust and well muscled, particularly around the calf and upper torso.

To the right of the figure of Hercules the body of Cacus and his rocky lair are shown. Cacus is shown in much the same position as he appears on Antoninus Pius' type (Plate 10.7), lying at the hero's left foot. The figures of the Aventine peoples who gave homage to Hercules on the earlier type are not shown on this example, and the rest of the field is vacant. The figure of Cacus and details of his lair appear less distinct than the figure of Hercules, probably due to wear, but possibly also because they were engraved in lower relief than the figure of the hero, thus literally throwing Hercules into high relief.

The depiction clearly suggests that the struggle with the monster is an event of the past, indeed the hero turns his back on the scene and rests.²¹³ While the presence of the body of Cacus and his rocky lair set the figure of Hercules within a specific temporal and spatial

²¹³ If Vermeule is correct in his observation of the apples being held in Hercules' hand (see Note 212), it might be argued that, because the slaying of Cacus and the episode in the Garden of the Hesperides are temporally and spatially separated, this design is an example of the 'synoptic' (Snodgrass 1982, pp.5f.) or 'simultaneous' (Weitzmann 1970, pp.13 - 14) methods of narrative depiction. However, from an artistic point of view, it would seem most unlikely that the die-engraver was concerned with presenting such complex narrative. The presence of the apples, symbols of Hercules' immortality, is not highlighted in the design. If the piece is genuine (see above Note 206), their inclusion in the design would seem to be due to copying from a prototype (see above Notes 210 - 211) rather than a conscious desire by the engraver to present two temporally and spatially separated episodes from the life of Hercules.

setting which is known from an external reference, and thus the type may be considered narrative, it is also a symbol of heroic triumph.

VI - Further Medallions of the 'Programme Series'?

While not recognized by Toynbee in her catalogue of coin- and medallion-types of the 'programme series', two medallions surviving from Antoninus Pius' reign depict scenes which, in terms of their subject matter and artistic qualities, suggest that they too may have been originally issued as part of the series to prepare for the celebrations associated with the anniversary of Rome's founding celebrated in A.D. 147/148. That Toynbee herself revised her definition of the scope of the series highlights the fact that it is artificial to regard the 'series' as a unified and coherent group consisting of a set number of pieces.²¹⁴

A medallion struck by Antoninus Pius between A.D.143 and 144 has survived in a very worn condition (Plate 12.5).²¹⁵ It depicts two men engaged in combat, and has traditionally been described as representing a gladiatorial show.²¹⁶ Mattingly, however, suggests

²¹⁴ Compare Toynbee 1925, pp.170 - 173, Toynbee 1942, pp.43 - 45, and Toynbee 1944, pp.143 - 144 and pp.193 - 194.

²¹⁵ Gnechi 1912, Tav.55.10. Banti 1984, Number 589. Gnechi 1912, Vol.II, p.23, describes the type: "Il soggetto affatto nuovo di questi due personaggi mi riesce oscuro e di difficile spiegazione, anche perche il medaglione bellissimo nel dritto e molto consunto e guasto al rovescio".

²¹⁶ Gnechi 1912, p.23. Banti 1984, p.331, describes the type as "Combattimento di gladiatori(?)".

that it may represent the battle between either the last Curiatius and the last Horatius, or Turnus and Aeneas.²¹⁷ These specific battles are known from Livy and Vergil respectively. Livy records the last stages of the conflict between the Curiatii and Horatii as the victorious last Horatius despatches his foe: "Male sustinenti arma gladium superne iugulo defigit; iacentem spoliat."²¹⁸ In the closing lines of his great epic, Vergil tells of the final struggle of Aeneas against Turnus:

incidit ictus

ingens ad terram duplicato poplite Turnus
hoc dicens ferrum adverso sub pectore condit
fervidus. ast illi solvuntur frigore membra
vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.

Aeneid Book XII. 926 - 7, 950 - 2.

The composition of the figures shown on the design is similar to that described by both Livy and Vergil. The medallion shows one figure fallen to his knees while his victorious adversary, shown to the right, dispatches him. In both the literary reports the vanquished warrior is said to be fallen. If one assumes that the scene depicted is not a generic representation of two gladiators, it is perhaps most likely,

²¹⁷ BMCRE IV, p.xcv. Also see Toynbee 1944, p.138.

²¹⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book I. xxv. 12 - 13.

given the emphasis placed on the hero Aeneas by the medallion- and coin-types issued during this period, that it depicts the battle between Aeneas and Turnus, the dramatic climax of the Aeneid itself.²¹⁹

While this medallion-type was not included by Toynbee in her catalogue of pieces belonging to the 'programme series', she does note that " If, as has been suggested ... these warriors are Turnus and Aeneas the type would belong to the Roman history series of 140 to 144".²²⁰ It could be argued that given the date of the medallion (which places it within the time of the 'programme series'), the fact that coins and medallions minted at Rome rarely depict gladiatorial contests,²²¹ and that many of the types of the 'programme series' illustrate the deeds of Aeneas as recorded by Vergil, this medallion is likely to have been originally struck as part of the main body of the 'programme series'. From the artistic point of view the ability of the die-engraver of this medallion-type to depict well proportioned and naturalistic figures in complex poses is paralleled by various other designs of the 'programme series'.

²¹⁹ Vergil, Aeneid Book XII. 926 - 950.

²²⁰ Toynbee 1944, p.146, note 197.

²²¹ Gnechi 1912, Vol.III, p.13, notes a medallion-type, combined with two obverse-types of Domitian; "Sullo scudo sono rappresentati quattro gladiatori davanti." A medallion-type of the Flavian Amphitheatre minted by Gordian III depicts a scene of combat (see Kent 1978, Plate 124, Number 448, and Gnechi 1912, Tav.104.6). On both these types the gladiatorial figures appear as minor elements of the design, whereas on the medallion-type in question the figures depicted dominate the flan. To have given gladiators such predominance on an officially issued piece is outside the tradition of Imperial numismatic production, a factor suggesting that the figures were intended to represent heroes engaged in combat.

A medallion-type depicting Hercules appears as a curious postscript to the 'programme series' (Plate 12.6).²²² The obverse legend **ANTONINUS AUG. PIUS P.P. TR. P. XVIII**, and the reverse legend **COS IIII**, date the piece to about A.D. 155, some seven years after the anniversary date of Rome's founding. However the scene depicted would appear within the spirit, subject matter, and artistic quality of the 'programme series' itself.

The left hand portion of the flan depicts a scene of sacrifice, "... fully in accord with representations of Roman state ritual",²²³ and similar to scenes depicted on other medallions issued under Antoninus Pius.²²⁴ Two attendants stand either side of a bull which they lead towards an altar in the centre. A smaller figure stands behind the altar, and a tetrastyle temple is shown in the background. While the depiction of the architectural features of the temple and altar serve to create a spatial setting in which the solemn act of sacrifice takes place, the depiction of such architectural elements is common to many scenes of state sacrifice shown on a variety of Imperial coin- and medallion-types.²²⁵ What makes this scene remarkable is the presence of Hercules who is shown standing to the

²²² Cohen 1880, *Antonin* 213. Gnechi 1912, Tav.45.3. Banti 1984, Number 94. Cabinet des Médailles, Number 93.

²²³ Ryberg 1955, pp.183 - 184.

²²⁴ Gnechi 1912, Tav.50.2 - 3.

²²⁵ For example see Ryberg 1955, pp.174 - 190.

right and facing the altar. In his left hand he holds his club and lion skin, while in his right he holds a patera from which he pours a libation onto the altar.

Ryberg identifies the scene as representing Hercules sacrificing at his own altar and suggests that it may represent the legend of Hercules' founding of the Ara Maxima.²²⁶ The episode of Hercules founding a cult to himself is described by Vergil:

ex illo celebratus honos laetique minores
servavere diem, primusque Potitius auctor
et domus Herculei custos Pinaria sacri.
hanc aram luco statuit, quae Maxima semper
dicetur nobis et erit quae maxima semper.

Aeneid Book VIII. 268 - 272

Livy puts the following words into the mouth of Evander:

"Iove nate, Hercules,
salve," inquit; "te mihi mater, veridica interpres
deum, aucturum caelestium numerum cecinit tibi
quam aram hic dicatum iri quam opulentissima olim in

²²⁶ Ryberg 1955, p.184. The design is paralleled in its depiction of a heroic figure engaged in a specific legendary sacrifice, conceived in the canon of Vota Publica types, by the 'Sacrifice by Aeneas of the Great Sow' type issued in A.D. 145 - 146 in the name of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar (Plate 12.2 - 3).

terrīs gens maximam vocet tuoque ritu colat." Dextra Hercules data accipere se omen inpleturumque fata ara condita ac dicata ait. Ibi tum primum bove eximia capta de grege sacrum Herculi

Book 1. vii. 10 - 12

It is significant that this episode lies between two of the deeds of Hercules depicted on the medallions of the 'programme series', immediately after the killing of the monster Cacus, and immediately before his banquet with the Potitii and Pinarii. That the episode of Hercules sacrificing to himself should come between events previously depicted on two of the 'programme series' medallion-types strengthens the case for Ryberg's identification of this scene. If one assumes that the medallion in question does in fact illustrate the episode recorded by Vergil, Livy and Ovid²²⁷ the type must be judged narrative, for it shows a recognizable individual engaged in a specific and unique action of sacrifice known from an external reference. The question remains, however, why the type should be issued so long after the 'programme series' to which it thematically and artistically belongs. It might be argued that the type was conceived during the period of the 'programme series' but was rejected, only to be accepted and struck in A.D. 155, or perhaps it

²²⁷ Ovid, *Fasti* I.579 - 586.

was struck on a medallion of the original series, now lost to us, and that this example is a re-issue. Whatever the specific circumstances surrounding the striking of this medallion may have been, it serves to illustrate that despite the large number of Greek mythological types introduced during the period of his fourth consulship, Antoninus Pius' interests in celebrating Roman legends was not simply confined to the years of the 'programme series'.

VII - A Narrative Overview of the 'Programme Series'

Many of Antoninus Pius' medallions have been categorized by Toynbee as belonging to the 'programme series' on the basis of two characteristics: that they were issued prior to A.D. 147/8 in order to prepare the way for celebrations of the nine-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Rome, and that the types themselves shared a common thematic concern - they depict traditional Roman legends. While it is impossible to ascertain whether or not the Imperial minting authority regarded them as a 'series' and distinct from those types depicting Greek mythological traditions, viewing the 'programme series' from a narrative perspective highlights relationships between types beyond those of date of issue and subject matter.

There appears to be a distinct relationship between the works of three of Rome's greatest writers, Vergil, Ovid and Livy,²²⁸ and the specific legendary scenes depicted on the medallions of the 'programme series'. It has been argued in this thesis that the 'Aeneid' medallion-type (Plates 6.1 and 10.1) was illustrative of passages of Vergil's *Aeneid*.²²⁹ Medallions of the 'programme series' including the 'Hercules and the Potitii and Pinarii' (Plates 11.11 and 12.1(a) - (b)), 'Aeneas Sacrificing the Great Sow' (Plate 12.2 - 3), 'Mars and Rhea' (Plate 11.6 - 8), 'Hercules and Cacus' (Plates 10.7 and 12.4), 'Hercules Sacrificing at the *Ara Maxima*(?)'²³⁰ (Plate 12.6), and 'Aeneas and Turnus(?)'²³¹ (Plate 12.5) types are subjects recorded by Vergil. Furthermore, in regard to the depiction of Ascanius on some types, Weigel has suggested that "It may be that Antoninus' moneyers were consciously following the story as it was found in Vergil."²³² Mythological and legendary

²²⁸ A relationship between passages from Livy and the NAVIUS, COCLES, 'Hercules and Cacus', AESCULAPIUS, 'Hercules and the Potitii and Pinarii', SABINAE, and 'Claudia Quinta' types has been noted. While evidence suggests a direct relationship between the medallion-types and the works of Ovid and Vergil, the nature of that between Livy's writings and the noted types is unclear. It may be that Livy's text itself served as a reference for the die-engravers, or perhaps the apparent relationship is simply due to the fact that Livy's work is one of the few accounts of Rome's legendary tradition to have survived. See also Toynbee 1944, pp.112., 143f., and 195f.

²²⁹ See Chapter Three.B, pp.50 - 66, and Appendix Two, The 'Aeneid' Medallion - a Narrative Interpretation.

²³⁰ While this medallion-type is known from a piece issued in A.D. 155, it may have a relationship with the 'programme series'. See Chapter Four.B.vi, pp.162f.

²³¹ The subject matter of this medallion-type is open to debate. See Chapter Four.B.vi, pp.159f.

²³² Weigel 1984, p.189.

events recorded by Ovid, such as 'Hercules and Cacus' (Plates 10.7 and 12.4), the landing of Aesculapius (Plate 11.2 - 4(b)), the devotion of Claudia Quinta (Plate 11.5), and 'Hercules Sacrificing at the Ara Maxima(?)' (Plate 12.6) were also depicted on 'programme series' medallions. Weigel has also noted a relationship between Antoninus Pius' coin-types and Ovid's Fasti: "A large number of the gods or religious/ mythological scenes portrayed on the coins can be found in Ovid's Fasti. ... This may indicate that a religious calendar or Ovid's Fasti itself served as a source for some of those gods selected for commemoration."²³³ The noted relationship between mythological subjects celebrated on medallions of the 'programme series' and the works of Vergil and Ovid, complemented by Weigel's findings in regard to contemporary coin-types, suggests that Antoninus Pius' die-engravers drew direct inspiration from the written word, and that their designs were intended to be close visual representations or illustrations of textual passages.

Artistically the narrative medallion-types of the 'programme series' share common qualities.²³⁴ Features such as the naturalistic representation of human figures and depiction of landscape element which create a sense of spatial setting reflect the high artistic ideals and technical skills of their engravers (Plates 10.6(a) - (b), 10.7,

²³³ Weigel 1984, p.195.

²³⁴ For discussion of the non-narrative nature of the 'She-wolf and Twins' motif, see Chapters One and Four.B.iv, pp.147 - 148.

11.1 - 5, 11.9, 11.11, 12.1(a) - (b), 12.1(a) - 3, and 12.6). That such ideals and skills were shared by the engravers responsible for the cutting of the dies used in the 'programme series' suggests that they may have been trained in a common artistic tradition, and belonged to a distinctive 'school' of medallion die-makers operating within the official Mint of Rome.

Evidence for the die-engravers' use of textual sources, the artistic and narrative similarities between types, and the arguments provided by Toynbee, clearly suggest that these types were the result of a planned programme of medallic production.²³⁵ Within the broad category of 'Roman mythological traditions', groups of a more specific legendary nature can be observed. The medallion-types issued posthumously for Faustina the Elder depicting Claudia Quinta dragging Cybele's ship to land (**Plate 11.5**), Mars descending to Rhea Silva (**Plate 11.6 - 8**), the rape of the Sabine women (**Plate 11.9**), and the Sabine women intervening in the conflict between the Sabines and the Romans (**Plate 11.10**), represent legendary traditions whose subject matter well suited posthumous striking for an empress. Furthermore Mattingly has noted a relationship between the 'Claudia Quinta' type, Antoninus Pius' antiquarian types and Faustina's personal devotion to Vesta and Cybele.²³⁶ Horvat has suggested that the **SABINAE** types of Faustina I had a special 'Tendenz' of their own, and that they represent part of an attempt to

²³⁵ Toynbee 1942, p.43.

²³⁶ BMCRE IV, p.xcvii.

revive an ancient marriage custom.²³⁷ As a group these various types share common characteristics; within the tradition of Antoninus Pius' celebration of Roman myths the active role of women is stressed and the types appear to reflect the personal religious interests of the empress.

The relationships between the **DIVA AUGUSTA FAUSTINA** medallions of the 'programme series' suggest that some medallion-types of the series were conceived as a related group. It is possible that medallion-types depicting events involving three of the greatest figures of Rome's past, Hercules, Aeneas and Romulus, were intended to depict specific heroic events in an episodic manner. Strong evidence for such a process is provided by types celebrating the actions of Hercules in Italy.

Two events involving Hercules were celebrated on medallions of the 'programme series', his killing of Cacus (Plates 10.7 and 12.4) and his feast with the Potitii and Pinarii (Plates 11.11 and 12.1(a) - (b)). A medallion issued in A.D. 155, (perhaps the surviving copy of a type originally issued or intended as part of the series?), shows him sacrificing at the Ara Maxima (Plate 12.6). According to Vergil these related events occurred over a brief period of time,²³⁸ and each medallion presents a scene of Hercules' activities in Italy.

²³⁷ Horvat 1928, and Toynbee 1942, p.45.

²³⁸ Vergil, Aeneid Book VIII. 101f.

While in isolation the various types are examples of the monoscenic mode of narrative art, when viewed as a group they take on the quality of a cyclic depiction. The term 'cyclic' may be applied to a narrative work which is composed of a number of separate scenes, within each of which the principles of spatial and temporal unity are maintained, but, when viewed as a coherent group, illustrate a series of actions related to a specific story or event.²³⁹ Such a complex arrangement, involving the use of separate scenes and the repetition of figures within the single frame, is not well suited to the limited plan of the medallions. The 'proto-cyclic' 'Aeneid' medallion-type (Plates 6.1 and 10.1) is the only Roman numismatic type to approach this mode of narrative.²⁴⁰

The observation that the medallion-types of the series depicting Hercules' actions have a cyclic quality is not intended to suggest that they were displayed for viewing as a group. It is unlikely that the various medallions were ever seen by their original recipients as a collection. Unlike other media of artistic expression such as relief sculpture and wall-painting, medallions, by their very nature, were portable, widely dispersed, and viewed in isolation. Nevertheless the fact that these medallions illustrate such closely related events suggests that they were conceived within the tradition of cyclic narration by officials at the Mint of Rome. In this regard this group

²³⁹ See Weitzmann 1970, pp.17 - 33.

²⁴⁰ See Chapter Three.B, pp.50 - 66, and Appendix Two, The 'Aeneid' Medallion - a Narrative Interpretation.

may be compared with Domitian's Ludi Saeculares series minted at Rome, the Antonine 'Labours of Hercules' series from Roman Egypt (see Appendix Four, Cyclic Narrative and Numismatic Art), and Postumus' 'Labours of Hercules' series minted at Cologne (see Appendix Three).

Events from the life of Aeneas are represented on several 'programme series' medallions: the 'Aeneid' medallion-type (**Plate 10.1**), Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius fleeing Troy (**Plate 10.2 - 5**), the borrowed design of the 'Aeneas and Ascanius in Latium' type (**Plate 10.6(a) - (b)**),²⁴¹ Aeneas' sacrificing of the Great Sow (a design, like that of Hercules sacrificing at the Ara Maxima, conceived within the tradition of Vota Publica types, **Plate 12.2 - 3**),²⁴² and Aeneas' battle with Turnus(?) (**Plate 12.5**). While some of these types appear to have been borrowed or adapted from numismatic and other prototypes, as a group they appear to form a comprehensive pictorial record of Aeneas' activities. In addition to the relationships between the 'Mars and Rhea' (**Plate 11.6 - 8**) and two **SABINAE** types (**Plate 11.9 - 10**) struck for Faustina the Elder noted above, these types also relate to the mythological figure of Romulus. While not considered an example of narrative art,^{242.b} the issuing of the traditional 'She-wolf and Twins' motif during the

²⁴¹ See Chapter Four.B.ii, pp.114 - 121, and **Figure XIX**.

²⁴² See Chapter Four.B.v - vi, pp.153 - 155.

^{242.b} See Chapters One, pp.2f., Two, pp.28 - 29, Three.A, p.34 and Four.B.iv, pp.147 - 148.

period of the 'programme series' may have been intended to serve as a link between depictions of Romulus' parentage and the violent founding of the Roman nation.

A narrative overview of these medallions highlights relationships between various types which suggest that, as a series, they were the result of an ordered and planned programme of numismatic production. Within the 'programme series', groups of medallion-types can be identified based on thematic similarities and their depiction of a specific hero. Some such groups, particularly that depicting the adventures of Hercules in Italy, appear to have been conceived within the tradition of cyclic narrative. If so the concept of pictorially representing successive actions related to a specific hero thus formed a guideline for the choice of designs, and, faced with the limitations of their media, the die-engravers isolated individual scenes of action within the frames of separate medallions.

SUMMARY

The reign of Antoninus Pius can be regarded as the zenith of Roman mythological numismatic narrative depiction. In terms of the number of such coin- and medallion-types issued and the artistic qualities of these narrative works, the principate of Antoninus Pius is unrivalled. Working within the artistic principles introduced during the Hadrianic period, and borrowing some of their designs and

mythological subjects, Antoninus Pius' die-engravers used the medallion-flans to develop the narrative potential of their artistic medium.

While the significance of the considerable number and great artistic beauty of Antoninus Pius' medallions carrying mythological scenes drawn from Hellenic traditions should not be overlooked, arguably his so-called 'programme series' represents the highpoint of Roman mythological numismatic narrative art. The series revived ancient traditions by celebrating Rome's unique legendary past, especially those events relevant to the city's founding and its heroes. The close connections between the various types and the legendary events recorded by Livy, Vergil and Ovid suggest that the die-engravers of the period either based their illustrations on the texts themselves or artistic works in other media based on the literary traditions.

The monoscenic method of narrative depiction, the method best suited to the limited field of the medallion- and coin-flan, was used to great effect in capturing the heroic actions of Hercules (**Plate 7.10 - 12**), Cocles (**Plate 11.1**), Claudia Quinta (**Plate 11.5**) and the rape of the Sabines (**Plate 11.9 - 10**). Similarly it was also employed to depict moments of relative quiet or stillness before or after great actions and thus create a sense of psychological drama, such as in the case of the 'Hercules and Cacus' (**Plate 10.7**), 'Hercules and the Potitii and Pinarii' (**Plates 11.11 and 12.1(a) - (b)**), and the 'Mars and Rhea Silvia' types (**Plate 11.6 - 8**). The

'programme series' also saw the re-issuing, with Antoninus Pius' portrait on the obverse, of the 'Aeneid' medallion-type (**Plate 10.1**), with its unique suggestion of temporal progression which might be called 'proto-cyclic', and the first and only use of the simultaneous method of narrative depiction in Roman minting of mythological types with the issuing of the 'Aeneas and Ascanius in Latium' medallion-type (**Plate 10.6(a) - (b)**).

Many examples of the 'programme series', such as the **COCLES** (**Plate 11.1**), **AESCULAPIUS** (**Plate 11.2 - 4(b)**), the 'Sacrifice of the Great Sow by Aeneas' (**Plate 12.2 - 3**) and the two **SABINAE** types (**Plate 11.9 - 10**), are excellent examples of the die-engravers' ability to create a visually credible illusion of spatial depth and setting within the limited confines of the medallion-flan. Another common artistic feature of Antoninus Pius' medallion- and coin-types, particularly those of the 'programme series', is the engravers' ability to depict naturalistic and organic representations of the human figure. These artistic features of the pieces of the 'programme series' suggest that they are the works of master die-cutters working within the same artistic tradition.

While several of the 'programme series' and philhellenic medallion-types issued under Antoninus Pius were to serve as models for die-engravers working under emperors such as Septimius Severus and Caracalla, Constantine the Great and Constantius II, and for the contorniate-engravers of the Late Empire, the artistic high-point of numismatic mythological narrative which occurred under

Antoninus Pius was to be largely restricted to his reign. Several narrative types were issued in the name of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar, but their production completely ceased under his principate and were only to re-appear spasmodically on the later coins and medallions of the Imperial Mint of Rome. This development suggests that numismatic celebrations of the events and individuals of mythology may have been inspired by the resolve and personal interests of the ruling Princeps.²⁴³

²⁴³ Crawford 1983, p.59, suggests "It would not be surprising if this group [the die-engravers] experimented and innovated, bringing their skills to bear in the creation of artistically satisfying types, which represented their ideas of the moment about the state and the ruler for whom they worked ... of course, an emperor may have issued a general directive to ensure that his coinage represented his 'personality' and the model may thus far be a descending one; but the pattern for the most part is surely one of a mint doing its best for its patron." Wallace-Hadrill 1986, p.67, following Levick 1982, p.107, suggests that "... difficulty lies in imagining that emperors personally played a significant part in the day-to-day choice of types.... It is more plausible to see lesser men at work... instead of the emperor addressing persuasion to his subjects, we have the subjects offering symbols of respect to the emperor himself." However, while the emphasis given to mythological depiction during the reign of Antoninus Pius may, to some degree, be a reflection of the mint-workers' interpretation of the emperor's personal interests, given the intensity and diversity of legendary types issued during this reign (notably the 'programme series') it would be difficult to imagine that the die-artists were working without some imperially dictated policy or plan. That the medallions were possibly presented by the Imperial hand (see Chapter Three.A, Note 5), suggests that a directive from the emperor may have been given in regards to their subject matter.

CHAPTER FIVE

MARCUS AURELIUS TO THE SEVERANS

A) MARCUS AURELIUS

B) COMMODUS

C) THE SEVERAN DYNASTY

A) MARCUS AURELIUS

During the principate of Marcus Aurelius no narrative mythological types were celebrated on the Imperial coins or medallions. Indeed the great wealth of mythological subjects celebrated on medallion-types issued in the name of Marcus Aurelius under Antoninus Pius all but disappeared during Marcus' reign as emperor. This dramatic shift in artistic emphasis argues that the personality and interests of the emperor himself may have played a role in the choice of subjects to be depicted by the die-engravers at the Mint of Rome. If so, this relationship between the emperor and his die-artists may help to explaining why the climax of mythological narrative depiction on numismatic objects occurred during the reigns of the philhellenic Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, and why such depictions were largely limited to their particular reigns.

Some non-narrative types originally issued by Antoninus Pius were copied under Marcus Aurelius. For example the Antoninus Pius' 'Hercules Crowned by Victory' type struck in A.D. 155 was re-issued in A.D. 174 (Plate 12.7).¹ Non-narrative types were also introduced under Marcus Aurelius, such as a 'Hercules Crowning Himself' type issued in the names of Lucius Verus in A.D. 165 (Plate 12.8),² and Marcus and Commodus (Plate

¹ Gnechi 1912, Tav. 60.2. For discussion of the original type minted under Antoninus Pius, see Chapter Four.A Notes 33 and 69.

² Gnechi 1912, Tavv.75.1 and 77.1. Also LIMC IV, Herakles p.765, n.740. A piece held in the Museo Nazionale Romano, Gnechi Collection 5.134, would
(Continued. ...)

12.9).³ Generally, however, military concerns increasingly overshadowed mythological celebrations on the medallion-flans. Thus Antoninus Pius' medallion-type showing 'Jupiter and a Giant' (Plate 7.13),⁴ changed to show Jupiter triumphant over a German warrior instead of a giant,⁵ was re-issued in A.D. 173 (Plate 12.10).⁶ The reign of Marcus Aurelius as Augustus sees the appearance of types such as Victory riding a quadriga,⁷ and Marcus parading with his troops.⁸ While naturalistic figures were evident on such medallions as the 'Buon Evento' type issued in A.D. 165,⁹ stiff, schematically arranged heraldic figures also began to appear, such as

appear to be an unframed example of this type. Vermeule 1957, p.285f., discusses this type and its possible prototypes.

³ Mattingly 1934/35, p.50 and Plate XVI.4.

⁴ See Chapter Four.A, pp.83 - 85.

⁵ Gneecchi 1912, Vol. II, p.28 and Mattingly (BMCRE V), p.clix, describe the figure as a giant. Toynbee 1944, p.227, argues that the figure of the giant on Antoninus Pius' type have been replaced by a figure representing a German warrior. She compares the medallion-type with a Hellenistic gem-design (see Figure IX). Given that the figure on the Aurelian-type holds a sword and shield (weapons not associated with giants), Toynbee's view is most probably correct. It should be noted that the pose of the horses and the depiction of the chariot varies between the Antoninus Pius and Aurelian types, and that the latter is not simply a 'reverse-image' copy of the former.

⁶ Gneecchi 1912, Tav.60.1. Dressel 1973, 3.Taf.VII.44. LIMC IV, Gigantes p.247, n.544.

⁷ Gneecchi 1912, Tav.63.8.

⁸ Gneecchi 1912, Tav.61.5.

⁹ Gneecchi 1912, Tav.66.5.

those of two facing Victories shown holding a shield between them which proclaims, **S P Q R VIC PARTHICAE**.¹⁰

Between A.D. 179 and 180 Marcus Aurelius issued a series of asses depicting the 'She-wolf and Twins' motif (**Plate 12.11**).¹¹ This traditional type,¹² symbolic of the 'Roma Renascens', may have been issued to symbolize the rise of Rome after the years of anxiety and peril caused by the German Wars.¹³ On these coins the she-wolf is shown facing to the right with the twins suckling beneath her. Above the figures rises a semi-circular representation of a grotto similar to that shown on some examples from the reign of Antoninus Pius (**Plate 6.3 and 6.6**).¹⁴ While the individuals depicted are recognizable legendary figures, they are shown without true temporal or spatial reference and were purely symbolic in purpose.

¹⁰ Gnechi 1912, Tav.64.1.

¹¹ BMCRE IV, Marcus 1715.

¹² See **Plates 1.2, 3.5 - 6, 4.2 - 5 and 6.3 - 6**.

¹³ BMCRE IV, p.cxlili.

¹⁴ See Chapter Four.A, pp.71 - 72.

B) COMMODUS

One mythological figure largely dominated the coin- and medallion-flans of the Commodan period - Hercules. That Hercules was so often portrayed is testimony to the emperor's delusion of association with the god/hero which, in the later period of his reign, reached manic proportions.¹⁵ Calling himself 'Hercules Romanus',¹⁶ Commodus caused himself to be portrayed in the guise of Hercules on coins and medallions, and in sculpture.¹⁷ One of the earliest medallions issued in the name of Commodus to depict Hercules was struck in A.D. 177 (Plate 13.1),¹⁸ and the god/hero appeared on the coinage in the second issue of A.D. 183.¹⁹

¹⁵ Dio, Roman History: Epitome of Book LXXIII.

¹⁶ Dio, Roman History: Epitome of Book LXXIII, Chapter 2.

¹⁷ Andreae 1973, Plate 97.

¹⁸ This type depicts Hercules standing to the left of the flan, being crowned by Victory (Gnecchi 1912, Tav.87.8; see Plate 13.1). It appears a direct copy of that first struck under Antoninus Pius in A.D. 155 (see Gnecchi 1912, Tav. 45.2) and re-issued under Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 174 (Plate 12.7). The 'Hercules Crowning Himself' type, known from medallions issued in the names of Lucius Verus (Plate 12.8), and Marcus and Commodus (Plate 12.9), was re-issued in A.D. 185 by Commodus. (Cohen 1880, Commode 475, and Gnecchi 1912, Tav.83.5 - 6; see Plate 13.2). For detailed discussion of this type see Vermeule 1957(c). While the various 'Hercules Crowned by Victory' and 'Hercules Crowning Himself' types are fine examples of the medallion-engravers' ability to depict visually credible representations of the human figure, they are of limited narrative interest as the action they depict is not specific.

¹⁹ On the coinage the figure of Hercules was first to appear on Commodan sestertii of the second issue of A.D. 183. The type shows Hercules standing, resting his right hand on his club and holding his bow and lion-skin in left arm (BMCRE IV, Commodus 505; see Plate 13.3). This type, which appears based on a statue-type of the hero, was to re-appear on sestertii and asses of A.D. 183/4 (BMCRE IV
(Continued. ...

Between A.D. 190 and 192 a type showing Hercules making a sacrifice over an altar, with a tree to the left of the flan, was issued on the reverses of aurei (Plate 13.4),²⁰ sestertii (Plate 13.5),²¹ dupondii (Plate 13.6 - 7),²² and on medallions (Plate 13.8 - 9).²³ While some minor compositional details vary on these various numismatic pieces, the basic design common to all depicts Hercules, naked to the waist, standing to the right with a cornucopia in his left hand and a patera in his extended right hand, sacrificing over a lighted altar. The low altar occupies the centre of the flans and the hero's club rests against it. A large tree is shown on the left. It rises to the upper region of the flans and above the altar where it divides into many leafy branches. Hercules' lion-skin, bow and quiver are shown hanging on the tree's trunk.

Commodus 525, 526, pp.792 - 794), and asses of A.D. 186/9. (BMCRE IV Commodus 616).

²⁰ BMCRE IV, Commodus 300.

²¹ BMCRE IV, Commodus 669.

²² BMCRE IV, Commodus 676, 677 and p.831. These dupondii are not illustrated in BMCRE IV, however photographic reproductions of the reverses have been obtained for use in this thesis. See Plate 13.6 (corresponding to BMCRE IV, Commodus 676), and Plate 13.7 (corresponding to BMCRE IV, Commodus 677).

²³ Cohen 1880, Commode 176f., Gnechi 1912, Tav.79.5 (see Plate 13.8), and 79.6 (see Plate 13.9), and Kapossy 1971/72, p.137, Plate I.16. Two coins struck between A.D. 187 and 188 depict Hercules in the attitude of sacrificing. A denarius-type shows him holding a patera (BMCRE IV, Commodus p.733), while an as-type depicts him pouring libations from a patera over an altar (BMCRE IV, Commodus p.733). Whether these types were intended to show Hercules in the specific act of sacrificing to himself, or (perhaps more likely) were representations of a typical action is impossible to determine.

It has been suggested by Mattingly that the type shows "Hercules ... in the act of sacrifice, and will naturally be interpreted as the Roman Hercules, sacrificing at the 'Ara Maxima', after killing the robber Cacus."²⁴ If one assumes this interpretation of the scene to be correct, the type may be judged to constitute an example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction, showing a recognizable individual engaged in a specific action known from an external reference. The same subject was depicted on a medallion struck during the period of the fourth consulship of Antoninus Pius (Plate 12.6).²⁵ Whereas Antoninus Pius' type was conceived within the canon of Roman state ritual representations and depicts Hercules with a tetrastyle temple, altar, attendants and sacrificial animal, the Commodan depiction of this subject places the action within a simple rural setting. Such a setting is, perhaps, more in keeping with the event of Hercules sacrificing to himself as described by Ovid,²⁶ Livy²⁷ and Vergil.²⁸ Indeed the major spatial element of the Commodan type, the tall tree, calls to mind Vergil's description of the event;

hanc aram luco statuit, quae Maxima semper
dicetur nobis et erit quae maxima semper....

²⁴ BMCRE IV, p.clxvii.

²⁵ See Chapter Four.B.iv, pp.162f.

²⁶ Ovid, Fasti I. 579 - 586.

²⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book I.vii.

²⁸ Vergil, Aeneid Book VIII. 268 - 272.

... Herculea bicolor cum populus umbra
 velavitque comas foliisque innexa pependit,
 et sacer implevit dextram scyphus. ocius omnes
 in mensam laeti libant divosque precantur.

Aeneid Book VIII. 270f.

The tree shown on these coins and medallions might be interpreted as representing the grove in which the sacrifice was set, thus linking the scene to the specific act of Hercules sacrificing to himself. From the narrative point of view the type is visually and psychologically stimulating. While the action depicted is not violent, it is nevertheless significant. Hercules, his labours finished, his club at rest and his lion-skin hung over the tree, founds a cult to his own divinity. The fruitfulness of the coming age is symbolized by the cornucopia held in the hero's left hand. Hercules' well proportioned and naturalistic body is visually credible, and features such as the altar and tree give the design an interesting and specific spatial dimension.

While the 'Hercules Sacrificing at the Ara Maxima' types may be judged to constitute narrative, the vast majority of Commodus' coins and medallions celebrate the hero by non-narrative means such as showing Herculean statue-types, the hero engaged in typical action, and Hercules-Commodus in conjunction with allegorical figures.

Such depictions can be found on Commodan numismatic pieces issued between A.D. 191 and 192,²⁹ and on the final group of Commodan issues to celebrate Hercules consisting of six medallion-types, probably prepared as New Year gifts in late A.D. 192.³⁰ The figure of Hercules, as depicted on these various non-narrative pieces, is characteristically naturalistic and organic, being robust and well muscled and proportioned. One type, depicting Hercules with the pelts of the Nemean lion and the Erymanthian boar resting on rocks behind him, is noteworthy (Plate 13.12).³¹ It shows the hero from a three-quarter view, turned away from the viewer. This medallion

²⁹ See, for example, BMCRE IV, Commodus 306, 346, 346a, 355 - 57a, 714, 716, 718 - 20. Also Gneecchi 1912, Tav.85. 8 - 9. On some pieces the heroic accoutrements of Hercules symbolically represent him, for example BMCRE IV, Commodus 343 - 5, 339 - 42, 711 - 13 and 721. Also Gneecchi 1912, Tavv.77.2, 79.9 - 10 and 80.1.

³⁰ One of these medallion-types, depicting Hercules-Commodus marking out the sulcus primigenius (Gneecchi 1912, Tav.79.7 - 8), is also known from the coinage (RIC III, Commodus 629 and 247. Also Toynbee 1944, p.74.). Compare this design, which shows Commodus as Hercules, with designs depicting the same action with Commodus in the dress of a priest issued in A.D. 190 (BMCRE IV Commodus 643, 644, 658 and 659). The five remaining reverse-types, known only from medallions, show statue-types of the hero leaning on his club and a tree trunk (Gneecchi 1912, Tav.80.2 - 3; see Plate 13.10), standing to the left of the flan and leaning on club (Gneecchi 1912, p.55 number 31), Hercules holding the pelt of the Nemean lion (Gneecchi 1912, Tav.80.4; see Plate 13.11), a three-quarter view of the hero standing with his back to the viewer with the pelts of the Nemean lion and Erymanthian boar resting on rocks behind him (Gneecchi 1912, Tav.80.5 - 6, and Kent 1978, Plate 106.364; see Plate 13.12), and the hero seated on a large rock with his club and other accoutrements (Gneecchi 1912, Tav.80.7; see Plate 13.13). Toynbee 1944, p.74, describes them as "... a homogeneous group of large bronze pieces of six different types, covering between them thirty-nine extant examples ... all bearing on the reverse the date TR P XVIII. All allude to the Hercules-Commodus cult and have thus a specially intimate and personal connection with the Emperor: the obverse invariably shows the head of Commodus, to right or left, hooded with the Herculean lion-skin and on well-preserved specimens it is quite clear that the Herculean figure on the reverses has the features of Commodus himself."

³¹ See above Note 30.

must rank as one of the most visually stimulating and credible representations of the human figure in the history of Imperial minting and is a tribute to the artistic and technical skill of the Commodan die-engravers. Nevertheless such types are of limited narrative interest, depicting as they do scenes of the hero engaged in typical actions which lack specific temporal and spatial setting.

It remains somewhat paradoxical that, given Commodus' undeniable interest in celebrating Hercules on numismatic objects, only one design of his reign can be considered an example of narrative art. This is especially true given the rich tradition of Herculean narrative types established by Antoninus Pius, and Commodus' reported personal interest in 're-living' his hero's exploits.³² It is quite evident that Commodan die-engravers lacked none of the technical and artistic skill of their counterparts working under Antoninus Pius, yet the Commodan period follows the general trend of the period of Marcus Aurelius' reign in its lack of narrative mythological depiction on numismatic pieces.

³² Dio, Roman History: Epitome of Book LXXIII Chapters 2 - 3, for example, record Commodus' own would-be battles with the Stymphalian birds and giants.

C) THE SEVERAN DYNASTY

Few of the surviving coins and medallions of the Severan dynasty issued by the Mint of Rome depict narrative mythological scenes.³³ Types depicting scenes inspired by mythological or legendary sources are all but replaced by those celebrating military victories, Imperial beneficence and devotions to the state gods and goddesses. Many of the deities so popular on the medallions of the second century such as Aesculapius, Apollo and Bacchus also disappear from the medallion-flan, their places taken by military deities such as Jupiter and Victory, or gods of special significance to individual emperors, such as Hercules (Caracalla), Liber (Geta) and Baal of Emesa (Elagabalus).³⁴

While the vast majority of Severan numismatic depictions of deities simply show cult statues in isolation or, under Alexander Severus, with the emperor and his retinue, one type issued on a medallion (Plate 14.1)³⁵ and denarii (Plate 14.2)³⁶ of Septimius

³³ The so-called niketeria, a class of Greek Imperial medallions, were struck during the Severan Period, probably under Alexander Severus. Several of these pieces depict mythological scenes. While their place of manufacture may have been Rome, (as suggested by Toynbee 1944(b), pp.71 - 72), this is by no means certain. Because of this uncertainty, and the fact that, with one possible exception (see Chapter Six.B, Note 19), the niketeria had no artistic impact on the coins or medallions created by the Mint of Rome, these pieces are discussed separately from the text of this thesis in Appendix Five, The Niketeria.

³⁴ Toynbee 1944, pp.161 - 162.

³⁵ Cohen 1880, Septimius Severus Number 250. Gneecchi 1912, Tav.22.2. LIMC IV, Gigantes p.247, n.545.

(Note 36 over page ...

Severus does show a narrative scene of Jupiter engaged in violent action. The subject of these Severan pieces, Jupiter riding in a quadriga attacking giants, had previously been celebrated on a medallion issued by Antoninus Pius (Plate 7.13).³⁷ The design used by the die-engravers of Septimius Severus would appear to be copied from Marcus Aurelius' type (Plate 12.10),³⁸ with the addition of a second figure.

One giant, shown beneath the rearing horses of Jupiter's quadriga, is depicted fallen to its knees with its head bent to the ground. The addition of this figure serves to enhance the sense of violent action created by the design, as Jupiter triumphs over one foe and prepares to hurl a thunderbolt at the remaining defiant giant. Because of the specific nature of the action depicted this type may be considered narrative. While his naturalistic treatment of the figures and apparent interest in depicting action and re-action suggest the die-engraver's intention to illustrate the violent event in a visually credible and stimulating manner, the type may also have served a symbolic purpose. Its message is underlined by the legend in the

³⁶ Cohen 1880, Septime Severe 248, and BMCRE V, Septimius Severus Number 527a. The denarius-type is not illustrated in BMCRE V, however a photographic reproduction of the reverse has been obtained for use in this thesis. The anguipedic features of the figure to the right are not apparent on that in the centre, under the chariot.

³⁷ See Chapter Four.A, pp.83 - 85.

³⁸ If, as Toynbee 1944, p.227 argues, the fallen figure on Marcus Aurelius' type represents a German warrior, the Severan die-engraver has changed it to represent a giant. For Marcus Aurelius' type see Chapter Five.A, p.177.

exergue which reads: **IOVI VICTORI**. Denarii and the medallion bearing this legend and design were probably intended to celebrate some Imperial victory associated with the emperor's visit to Africa in that year.³⁹

The **IOVI VICTORI** type illustrates that the die-engravers of the Severan period drew some inspiration from the numismatic creations of earlier periods, and that they had the ability to engrave narrative types when the depiction of scenes of specific mythological action was perceived to be an appropriate vehicle for the conveyance of a political message. Artistic concerns are evident, and because of the naturalism of the figures and the quality of the violent action depicted the type may be judged 'good' narrative. Nevertheless the likely symbolic purpose of the type suggests that the narrative method of artistic expression was employed during the Severan period when viewed as an appropriate vehicle to aid the dissemination of a political message.

As one of chief gods of Septimius Severus' native Leptis Magna, Hercules was celebrated on Severan coins. Non-narrative depictions, such as numismatically represented statue-types of Hercules, date from the earliest years of Septimius Severus' reign.⁴⁰ A narrative

³⁹ BMCRE V, p.clix.

⁴⁰ Cohen 1880, Septimius Severus Numbers 210 and 213. Hercules was also commonly depicted in the company of Liber on the coinage (BMCRE V, Plates 22.1 and 22.10, 35.1 - 2), and on a medallion minted at Rome (Gnecchi 1912, Tav.93.1; see Plate 14.3).

type depicting Hercules was issued during the joint reign of Septimius and Caracalla. The design was used on the reverses of an as-type (Plate 14.4)⁴¹ and an aureus-type (Plate 14.5)⁴² which were minted in A.D. 206, perhaps to celebrate the twin consulships of Caracalla and Geta in A.D. 205.⁴³ The reverse design of these types is a copy of an Antonine medallion of the so-called 'programme series' minted during the period of Antoninus Pius' fourth consulship showing Hercules seated at a table with the Potitii and Pinarii (Plates 11.11 and 12.1 (a) - (b)).⁴⁴

The Severan aureus- and as-types are better preserved than their Antonine prototype. Compositional details of the Severan coin-types show complete deference to the Antonine medallion-type which they copy.⁴⁵

Mattingly has suggested that "... the type of Hercules as conqueror of Cacus, entertained by the priestly guilds of the Potitii

⁴¹ BMCRE V, p.345, Cohen 1880, Caracalla Number 39 and Hill 1964, Pl. XV.11. See also Melville Jones 1990, p.246.

⁴² Hurter 1980, p.41, Plate 1a.

⁴³ Hill 1964, p.180 and Hurter 1980, p.40.

⁴⁴ See Chapter Four.B.iv, pp.148 - 152.

⁴⁵ Details of the design appear more clearly on the Severan coins than on the Antonine medallion. For example the architectural feature, which is difficult to distinguish on the medallion, has been identified as a festooned aedicula by Hurter 1980, p.40. McKay 1984, p.247, has suggested the possibility that the type may be based on a painted prototype.

and Pinarii, is probably a sequel to the honours paid to the god at the Secular Games of A.D. 204. The ritual was certainly modified to enhance the glories of Hercules and Liber"⁴⁶ While this point helps to explain the reason for the re-issuing of this type by Caracalla, the die-engravers choice of the as- and aureus-flan to carry the design is most curious.⁴⁷

The use of coinage to portray mythological narrative depictions was rare during the pre-Severan history of the Imperial Mint of Rome. When narrative coin-types have been observed, they are characteristically simple, involving few figures and generally lacking in elements of setting and landscape.⁴⁸ The employment of coin-flans to carry such a complex narrative scene is most unusual.

While the original Antonine medallion which displayed the 'Hercules and the Potitii and Pinarii' type had a diameter of thirty five millimetres, the Caracallan as' diameter is approximately twenty-seven millimetres and that of the aureus is approximately nineteen millimetres. While the technical skill of the die-engravers

⁴⁶ BMCRE V, p.clxxiii. Carlson 1971, p.27, suggests that the type is related to a banquet held as part of the celebrations of the Ludi Saeculares.

⁴⁷ It should be noted that surviving examples of the two coin-types are extremely rare. Only one example of the as, now held in Paris, is known to have survived. Weighing 11.33 grammes, the as is within the weight-range of asses minted in Rome during the joint reign of Septimius Severus and Caracalla. The average weight of asses of this period is 10.30 grammes (see BMCRE V, p.xxii).

⁴⁸ For examples of the use of coinage to carry narrative mythological designs in the Imperial period up to the reign of the Severans, see **Plates 10.2 - 4, 11.7 - 8, and 13.4 - 7.**

of these exceptional examples of the miniature relief is beyond reproach, the artistic process they have adopted has been simply to reduce in scale a given design so as to fit it within the confines of smaller flans. The overall effect of this process has been to create an extremely complex and cluttered type, details of which are very difficult to distinguish with the unaided eye. This is particularly true of the aureus-type, for while the figures of Hercules and one of the hosts seated to the right are reasonably clear, the various figures and objects to the left are extremely difficult to recognize. In this regard the Caracallan aureus may be compared with an aureus-type minted in A.D. 207 in the name of Geta which depicts a typical Bacchanalian tableau (Plate 14.6).⁴⁹

The Caracallan aureus- and as-types depicting Hercules and the Potitii and Pinarii are significant for several reasons. They serve to illustrate that some degree of thematic and artistic continuity existed between the Antonine and Severan engravers working at the Mint of Rome, and that the technical skill of the die-cutters of the Severan period had not diminished during that period. From the narrative point of view they are exceptional examples of the use of coins to carry complex narrative designs. However they also go some way to

⁴⁹ This type, reviving a theme celebrated on Antonine medallions (for example see Gnecci 1912, Tav. 46.9) shows Bacchus and Ariadne seated to the right of the field with a panther before them. Surrounding this group is a veritable pageant of figures and beasts including Silenus, a satyr, two attendants, a flute player and a maenad. The nine figures crowded onto this flan are most difficult to distinguish. See Kent 1978, Plate 113, Number 392, Hurter 1980, pp.40 - 41, Hill 1977, Illustration 24, and LIMC III, Bacchus p.555, n.202.

explaining why the coinage was so seldom used as a medium for the depiction of narrative mythological scenes - the extremely limited scale of the flans of the everyday coinage, particularly the aureus-flan, made such depiction impractical.

SUMMARY

The flowering of narrative mythological depiction on numismatic pieces which occurred during the reign of Antoninus Pius was to be short-lived. While his Imperial successor, Marcus Aurelius, copied a few of the non-narrative mythological types of his adoptive father's reign, and altered Antoninus Pius' 'Jupiter and a Giant' design (Plate 7.13) so as to show Jupiter overcoming a German warrior (Plate 12.10), examples of mythological numismatic narrative depiction dating from his principate are unknown. In the Commodan and Severan periods mythological narrative types were rarely issued, and when they do appear it is often as copies of earlier types.

Non-narrative coin- and medallion-types from the reigns of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, and the Severan period, clearly show that the artistic and technical skills of their die-engravers were equal to those of Antoninus Pius' mint. For example medallions from the reign of Commodus, particularly those depicting the god/hero Hercules, illustrate that the die-engravers' artistic ability to

portray naturalistic figures in visually stimulating settings had not diminished since Antoninus Pius' reign. The change in emphasis away from mythological narrative depictions which occurred on the medallions and coins of Marcus Aurelius, Commodus and the Severan rulers cannot, therefore, be explained as the result of a lack of artistic talent on the part of the die-engravers of the Mint of Rome. It is more likely that the discrepancy between the period of the reign of Antoninus Pius and that of his immediate successors in regard to numismatic mythological narrative depiction is a reflection of the personal interests of the individual emperors or their minting authorities.

Of the numerous Hercules types issued on the coinage and medallions of the Commodan period only one narrative type has been identified, 'Hercules Sacrificing at the Ara Maxima' (Plate 13.4 - 9). It is somewhat incongruous that, given the numerous narrative depictions of Hercules issued during the reign of Antoninus Pius, and Commodus' personal enthusiasm for Herculean feats, only one such type was issued during his reign.

The Severan Period was to foreshadow the general trends of mythological numismatic narrative depiction for the rest of the Imperial era. The 'Hercules and the Potitii and the Pinarii' type (Plate 14.4 - 5) and the IOVI VICTORI type (Plate 14.1 - 2) were copied or adapted from earlier medallions. Both reproduced types were issued on the coinage. During the post-Severan period copying of earlier mythological types, especially those of Antoninus

Pius, was to become common, as was the use of the coinage to carry such subjects.

CHAPTER SIX

THE POST-SEVERAN PERIOD - A.D. 235 TO 340.

A) GALLIENUS

B) MAXIMIAN

C) CONSTANTINE I

D) CONSTANTIUS II

In the post-Severan period the issuing of mythological depictions from the Mint of Rome was spasmodic, occurring during the reigns of emperors such as Gallienus, Maximian, Constantine the Great, and Constantius II. That such issues were limited to the reigns of individual emperors strengthens the view that the choice of mythological subjects for numismatic depiction depended solely upon the personal interests and tastes of the ruling princeps. In the case of Constantius II, for example, historical evidence survives to testify to his cognizance of Roman traditions.

In general the mythological scenes celebrated on the coinage and medallions of the late Imperial period, such as Jupiter and Amalthea, and the 'She-wolf and Twins', were inspired by types issued in earlier reigns. Interestingly the most innovative narrative types of this period, forming a series depicting the Labours of Hercules struck between A.D. 259/60 and 268/69 by the Western pretender Marcus Cassianus Latinus Postumus, were not struck at Rome, but at the Mint of Cologne (see Appendix Three, The 'Labours of Hercules Series' Issued by Postumus at the Mint of Cologne). Some of these may have inspired coin-types issued later by the emperor Maximian.

Both the coin- and medallion-flans were used to display mythological designs during the period in question. While the coinage was not commonly employed for carrying such depictions during the Imperial period, its use marginally increases relative to the medallions used for narrative mythological depiction during the period of the Late Empire. The dramatic decline of the medallion-

flan as a medium for mythological depiction which occurred during the third century has been observed by Toynbee: "Preoccupied as they were with wars and political upheavals, or with appeals to the gods to preserve the Roman state and bless their own efforts to maintain it, the Emperors of the third century had little leisure for literary and archaeological pursuits. Indeed, the contrast between the second century of imperial peace and the third century of imperial crisis is nowhere more vividly revealed than in our study of medallion reverse types with scenes from mythology and legend."¹

A) GALLIENUS

The reign of Gallienus witnessed a dramatic revival of mythological numismatic depiction. The Mint of Rome had issued very few mythological types since the Severan period, an exception being the traditional 'She-wolf and Twins' motif which was struck on sestertius-² and antoninianus-flans³ under Philip I (Plate 14.7 - 8). Gallienus' interest in mythological figures and events is evident not

¹ Toynbee 1944, p.162.

² HCC III, Philip I 71.106.

³ HCC III, Philip I 68.46. Also see RIC IV, p.70 number 15 and Plate 6.9. An antoninianus-type of the same period shows the she-wolf facing to the right, see RIC IV, p.70 number 16.

only in the number of such types issued during his principate, but also in the range of subject matter introduced.⁴

A bronze medallion bearing the reverse legend **SALUS URBIS** and depicting the traditional 'She-wolf and Twins' motif was issued under Gallienus in the name of Saloninus (**Plate 15.1**).⁵ Photographic reproductions of this now lost medallion indicate that the piece survived in a worn condition, and while the basic composition is clear, details are difficult to observe.⁶ The she-wolf faces to the left, with her head turned to look towards the twins shown suckling beneath her. The 'She-wolf and Twins' type is of extremely limited narrative interest, being devoid of stimulating action and spatial setting. Its re-appearance at this time does, however, serve to emphasize the interest in traditional mythological scenes which occurred during the Gallienic period.⁷

⁴ For example creatures such as the Griffin (HCC IV, Gallienus 12.88; see **Plate 14.9**), and Hippocamp (HCC IV, Gallienus 13.118; see **Plate 14.10**) were celebrated, along with Centaurs (HCC IV, Gallienus 13.95; see **Plate 14.11**) and Pegasus (HCC IV, Gallienus 14.127; see **Plate 14.12**). Statue-types of the god/hero Hercules were also depicted on medallions (Gnecchi 1912, Tav.3.4; see **Plate 14.13**) and double-aurei (HCC IV, Gallienus 10.G.1 and 11.35; see **Plate 14.14 - 15**) issued during his reign. While depictions of statue-types and individual mythological figures are of limited narrative interest, they serve to highlight the relative diversity and intensity of Gallienus' mythological types.

⁵ Gnecchi 1912, Tav.155.17.

⁶ Toynbee 1944, p.163. The depiction of this symbolic motif at this time was perhaps intended to announce the ill-fated desire that the relative stability and security of Gallienus' reign would be maintained by the succession of his son.

⁷ Legends noting Gallienus' second, third and fourth consulships were carried on coin-types bearing a reverse design showing Mars approaching the reclining figure of Rhea Silvia. Two aureus-types are noted in Cohen 1880, Gallien, Number 1003 - 1004, RIC V.I, p.73, Number 67 - 68, and HCC IV, p.lvii. The reverse legends of these coins has been recorded as **TRIB. POT. COS. PP.** and **TRIB. POT.**
(Continued. ...)

Imperial numismatic depictions of the infant Jupiter being suckled by, or riding atop the she-goat Amalthea are known from the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.⁸ The specific mythological individuals depicted in these types served the symbolic function of heralding a new 'Golden Age', especially in regard to celebrating the rise of new princes.⁹ Between A.D. 253 and 255 the figures of Jupiter and Amalthea were used in this manner to celebrate Valerian II. Several coin-types of this period depict Jupiter riding atop the she-goat, including a sestertius-type bearing the reverse legend **IOVI**

COS. II respectively. It has, however, been suggested by Menadier 1914, p.114, Number 149 and note, that these coins are one and the same type, the legend of one having been mis-read. As the Paris piece is now lost, it is impossible to confirm this point. While RIC V.I, p.73 attributes them to the Mint of Rome, HCC IV, p.xlvii suggests an 'Eastern Mint(?)'. The denarius noted by Cohen 1880, Gallien, Number 1005 (corresponding to Cabinet des Médailles Number 2.226.8874, see **Plate 15.2**), bearing the reverse legend **TRIB POT. VIII COS III** is attributed in both RIC V.I, p.161, and HCC IV, p.lvii, to the Mint of Rome. Dr.Andrew Burnett has kindly brought to my attention a further base-silver coin bearing the same reverse design and the legend **TRIB. POT. COS. IIII** (British Museum Number 1846-9-10-230). Dr.Cathy King of the Heberden Coin Room has also kindly brought to my attention a coin once in the Pfau collection (now lost) noted as bearing this same reverse legend and design, but notes that it was classed in a table of copper coins. Alföldi 1927, p.201, has suggested that the various coins bearing the 'Mars and Rhea Silvia' reverse design were issued at the Mint of Milan. This attribution, based on stylistic grounds of the obverse-types, has been accepted by both Drs. Burnett and King. Dr.King has further informed me that within the relevant forthcoming edition of RIC she has included these types in a footnote in the Mint of Milan catalogue, and omitted them from the Mint of Rome catalogue. For the sake of this thesis this attribution will be followed. From the narrative point of view the reverse design carried on these various types would appear to be a direct copy of a 'Mars and Rhea Silvia' type issued in the name of Faustina the Elder (see **Plate 11.7** and Chapter Four.B.iii, pp.137 - 140).

⁸ See Chapters Three.A, pp.33 - 34, Four.A, pp.72 - 74, and **Plates 4.1** and **6.7 - 8**.

⁹ BMCRE IV, p.xcv.

EXORIENTI(?) (Plate 15.3),¹⁰ and antoniniani bearing the reverse legend **IOVI CRESCENTI** (Plate 15.4 - 5).¹¹ The **IOVI EXORIENTI(?)** coin-type shows the she-goat facing to the left with the infant Jupiter holding her horns with his right arm and extending his left. Coin-types bearing the reverse legend **IOVI CRESCENTI** show Amalthea facing to the right, with Jupiter mounted.¹² While these coin-types are of little narrative significance, it is of interest to compare the Gallienic types with those of the same subject matter issued under Antoninus Pius (Plate 6.7 - 8).¹³ Whereas the Antonine types are characterized by the organic naturalism of the figure represented and an interesting pose, the Gallienic types are schematic in nature and lacking in visual credence.

¹⁰ Cohen 1880, Salonin 33, Cabinet des Médailles, Number 4.141.4364. Cohen, 1880, Salonin p.521, notes, "Mionnet a mal lu CRESCENTI sur cet exemplaire qui est peut être unique." The legend, as preserved on the available reproduction of the coin, is indistinct.

¹¹ Cohen 1880, Salonin 29, and Cabinet des Médailles Number 2225.9136; see Plate 15.4. HCC IV, p.1, notes that this reverse-type was combined with obverse-types bearing the legends **P LIC VALERIANUS CAES**, and **COR (LIC) VALERIANUS CAES(AR)**, and that quinarius- and as-types bearing the same design may exist. HCC IV, Valerian II V.II.4; see Plate 15.5. HCC IV, p.1 notes that this reverse-type was combined with obverse-types bearing the legends **P C L VALERIANUS N(OB) C(AES)**, and **COR (LIC) VALERIANUS CAES(AR)**. Several coin-types bearing the 'Jupiter and Amalthea' motif are also known from the Mint of Mediolanum (see RIC V.I., p.99, Numbers 393 - 394).

¹² Slight differences in the pose of Jupiter can be observed between the types; that represented by Plate 15.4 shows Amalthea in a most schematic manner.

¹³ See Chapter Four.A, pp.72 - 74.

Two noteworthy medallions, one gold, the other 'silver',¹⁴ were issued between A.D. 262 and 268 in the names of Gallienus (Plate 15.6)¹⁵ and Salonina (Plate 15.7)¹⁶ respectively. They bear the reverse legend **PIETAS FALERI** and depict Amalthea suckling the infant Jupiter.¹⁷ The reverses of both medallions appear identical and, in contrast to the **IOVI EXORIENTI(?)** and **IOVI CRESCENTI** coin-types described above, exhibit some points of artistic merit. The she-goat is shown facing to the right standing on a baseline which forms an exergue across the lower portion of the medallion-field. Her bearded head is turned to the left, watching the suckling infant. The most striking aspect of the goat's pose is the positioning of her legs. Her front legs are shown wide apart as if in full stride, revealing a youth, possibly Veiovis,¹⁸ sitting between them. Her nearest hind leg is raised forward off the groundline, giving clear view of the suckling Jupiter. The muscling of this raised hind leg is pronounced, having the effect of making the whole creature appear more naturalistic and organic. The raised leg not only gives the observer an uninterrupted view of the action of

¹⁴ See Toynbee 1944, p.162.

¹⁵ Gneccchi 1912, Tav.3.7. LIMC I, Amaltheia p.583, n.17.

¹⁶ Gneccchi 1912, Tav.27.8.

¹⁷ For a detailed discussion of this medallion-type see Babelon 1900, pp.179 - 206. Toynbee 1942, p.47, and Toynbee 1944, p.163, following Babelon, suggests that the medallions were issued as an allusion to Salonina's charity in rescuing children abandoned during the plague of A.D. 262.

¹⁸ Toynbee 1944, p.162.

Jupiter, but it also gives the design an enhanced temporal quality as the design appears to capture a momentary scene. A large tree which rises from behind the goat's rump to the upper region of the medallion-flan where it divides into four branches serves to give the scene a sense of spatial setting and increases visual interest by occupying an otherwise vacant section of the field. An eagle, shown to the extreme right on the baseline, and a fulmen in the exergue are symbols of Jupiter's power and authority.

Despite the fact that the medallion-flan was rarely used as a medium for mythological depiction during the period of the later empire, features of the **PIETAS FALERI** medallion-type such as the organic rendering of the goat's body, interest in pose, and the establishment, to some degree, of spatial and temporal setting, argue that the medallion-engravers of the Gallienic age were not totally devoid of artistic talent and technical skill, and had the ability to depict mythological scenes in a visually stimulating manner.¹⁹

¹⁹ It is possible that the **PIETAS FALERI** medallion-type may reflect the influence of the niketerion engravers. The artistic qualities of these medallion-types stand in stark contrast to those of contemporary coin-types showing the same motif, and indeed these medallions are, in terms of their artistry, unparalleled by other medallions of Gallienus (see, for example, Gnechi 1912, Tavv. 113 - 116). Furthermore a point of detail suggests that the design was the product of copying. On the gold piece held in the Cabinet des Médailles, Number 9.M.1425, the right foreleg of the she-goat, shown angled behind the right hindleg, is poorly handled, being too diminutive and schematic. That the creator of such a balanced and naturalistic composition would make such an error appears paradoxical, and it might be explained as the result of erroneous copying from a prototype. These factors suggest that the works may reflect the hand of a niketerion-engraver, or one trained in their tradition. If so they are the only such third century mythological designs issued in Rome itself to have been so influenced. For further discussion of the niketeria, see Appendix Five, The Niketeria.

While exhibiting these artistic features, the **PIETAS FALERI** medallion-type appears to be symbolic rather than illustrative in intent. Despite the depiction of action and the limited sense of spatial setting created by the die-artist, the scene appears 'outside' time.

B) MAXIMIAN

The coinage of Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus minted at Rome bears witness to his adoption of Hercules as his special patron, and indeed he became known as 'Maximianus Herculus'.²⁰ Many Herculean types from the period prior to the Reforms of Diocletian appear to represent cult-statues of the hero holding various accoutrements including his club, a branch, the lion-skin, a trophy and bow.²¹ Similarly various medallions issued throughout the reign of Maximian depict statues of the hero.²² While these depictions do not constitute narrative art, they serve to highlight Maximian's interest in numismatically celebrating the hero Hercules

²⁰ For example a medallion issued under Diocletian bears the reverse legend **HERCULIO MAXIMIANO AUG.** See Toynbee 1944, p.184.

²¹ For example see HCC IV, Maximian 55.10 - 17. Maximian's Imperial predecessors also issued non-narrative 'Hercules' types from the Mint of Rome, showing the hero variously with his bow, lion-skin and club. For example see HCC IV, p.cviii (Aurelian), pp.clx - clxi (Carinus), p.clxix (Numerian), and pp.clxxiv - clxxv (Diocletian).

²² For example see Gnechi 1912, Tav.126.4, and Toynbee 1944, Plate XII.10.

and place in context the narrative types depicting Herculean Labours which were to be issued by the Mint of Rome in his name.

Narrative types depicting Hercules issued from the Mint of Rome under Maximian in the period before the Reforms of Diocletian form an interesting group. While not as extensive as the series issued by Postumus at the Mint of Cologne,²³ Maximian's 'Hercules' coin-types celebrate three of the hero's exploits; his encounters with the Nemean lion, Nessus, and the Cerynaian stag.²⁴

²³ See Appendix Three, The 'Labours of Hercules Series' Issued by Postumus at the Mint of Cologne.

²⁴ Further Hercules types minted outside Rome in the name of Maximian include: (a) Hercules carrying the Erymanthian boar, see Cohen 1880, Maximien Hercule 637, and Brauer 1910, Taf.II.19. This reverse-design is most similar to one carried on a coin of Postumus' 'Labours of Hercules Series' (see Appendix Three, **Figure E.viii**). (b) Hercules dragging Cerberus, see Cohen 1880, Maximien Hercule 259. This design may also be compared with coins of Postumus' 'Labours of Hercules Series', (see Appendix Three, **Figure F.vi - vii**). HCC IV, pp.clxxxiii - clxxxiv notes several coin-types bearing the obverse legend IMP MAXIMIANUS AUG, and the reverse legend VIRTUS AUGG, and carrying reverse designs depicting a variety of Hercules' labours to have been issued by the Mint of Rome. These include a 'Hercules and the Cerynaian Stag' quinarius-type (see below Note 30), 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' and 'Hercules and Antaeus' quinarius-types. Cohen 1880, Maximien Hercule 584, notes the 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' type, and variants bearing the obverse legend MAXIMIANUS P. F. AUG (Cohen 1880, Maximien Hercule 585 - 586). RIC V.I, p.285 places all of these 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' types as having been minted at Siscia (RIC V.I, Numbers 568 and 569 (the latter including Cohen 586 and 585)). Bastien 1972, p.124, Number 48 (see **Plate 15.19**) includes the IMP MAXIMIANUS AUG type in his catalogue of coins from Lyon. Michel Amandry of the Cabinet des Médailles has expressed the opinion that both types were struck at the Mint of Ticinum. Brauer 1910, p.89, describes the reverse design, "Herakles hält schou die Äpfel in der Hand, obwohl er erst den Drachen bekämpfen will." From a narrative point of view the design is poor, the figure of the hero being unnaturalistic and, given the limitations of the scale of the coin-flan, Hercules' action is somewhat indistinct. The 'Hercules and Antaeus' type noted in HCC IV, p.clxxxiv to have been minted at Rome is here assumed to be the same coin noted by Cohen 1880, Maximien Hercule 657. Cohen's 'correction' of the reverse legend, described by Banduri as VIRTUS AUGG, to VIRTUTI AUG is erroneous. Bastien 1972, p.124 Number 47 (see **Plate 15.20**), attributes this coin to the Mint of Lugdunum, and it is this
(Continued. ...)

Hercules' struggle with the Nemean lion was celebrated on a variety of quinarius- and aureus-types struck between A.D. 280 and 294/96. The narrative qualities of the designs carried on the reverses of the quinarius-types are limited (Plate 15.8 - 9).²⁵ On these types the violent nature of the struggle is suggested by the pose of the hero. Hercules is depicted in the centre of the flan, facing to the right with his left leg bent against the attacking lion and his right leg extended to bear his weight, and his right arm thrown around the animal's neck. The die-engravers have, however, failed to represent the figure in a naturalistic manner; for example the upper section of Hercules' right leg fails to connect organically with his hip. Such features detract greatly from the visual credence of the designs, and render them 'poor' examples of narrative art.

attribution which has been adopted in this thesis. In regard to its subject matter the reverse-design of this coin may be compared with that carried on a coin issued by Postumus from the Mint of Cologne (see Appendix Three, Figure F.iv).

²⁵ Quinarii carrying the 'Hercules and the Nemean lion' designs bear the reverse legend **VIRTUS AUGG**, and the obverse legends: **IMP MAXIMIANUS P F AUG** (**HCC IV**, Maximian 55.19, RIC V.II, Number 528, Gneccchi 1912, Massimiano Erculeo 51, Cohen 1880, Maximien Hercule 593; see Plate 15.8), **MAXIMIANUS AUG** (Gneccchi 1912, Tav.158.28; see Plate 15.9), and **IMP MAXIMIANUS AUG** (Gneccchi 1912, Massimiano Ercule 52, Cohen 1880, Maximien Hercule 594). In regard to mint attribution, it is here provisionally accepted that both types were issued from the Mint of Rome. Lacking mint-marks, the former type is attributed to Rome in **HCC IV**, p.241, and **RIC V.I**, Number 528. The obverse legend of the latter is also known from a 'Hercules and the Nemean lion' type issued at Lugdunum (Bastien 1972, p.124, Number 45). However the style of the obverse portrait carried on this coin would appear different to that carried on the Mint of Rome(?) type bearing the same legend.

In contrast to the quinarius-types discussed above, the narrative qualities and artistic features of the 'Hercules and the Nemean lion' designs carried on the aurei are most fine (Plate 15.10 - 12).²⁶ As on the quinarius-types, the hero stands in the centre of the coin-flan, facing to the right where the beast is shown. On two of the aureus-types (Plate 15.10 - 11) a large abandoned club is depicted to the left.²⁷ On these types, which differ from each other in points of detail, the hero's right leg is extended, the left bent under the weight of the leaping beast. On the third type (Plate 15.12) the size of the club is much reduced, and the action of the legs is reversed, with the straightened right leg being gripped by the lion's hind foot. Here the beast, shown with a full mane, appears in a more upright position as though attempting to claw its way up Hercules' body.

The 'Hercules and the Nemean lion' designs carried on these aurei are fine examples of the die-engravers' art. On all the organically represented figure of Hercules is depicted in a robust and

²⁶ Aurei carrying the 'Hercules and the Nemean lion' designs bear the reverse legend **VIRTUS AUGG** (mint-mark **PR**), and the obverse legends: **IMP MAXIMIANUS P F AUG** (British Museum Number 1874-7-15-116, *RIC* V.II, p.277 Number 499 (where the legends are erroneously recorded), Cohen 1880, *Maximien Hercule* 587; see Plate 15.10), **VIRTUS MAXIMIANI AUG** (British Museum Number 1900-11-5-3, *RIC* V.II, p.277 Number 500, Cohen 1880, *Maximien Hercule* 591, Kent 1978, Plate 151.584; see Plate 15.11), and **MAXIMIANUS P F AUG** (Foville 1903, Plate XVIII.5; see Plate 15.12).

²⁷ For discussion of the narrative significance of this allusion to an earlier stage of the struggle, see Chapter One, Notes 45ff.

well muscled manner. His pose, and that of his foe, successfully suggest the violent nature of their struggle. Physical action and reaction are apparent; the hero braces himself against the lion's attack, while the beast's arching body, clawing limbs and flying mane and tail all testify to the brutality of its attack. Such details attract the interest of the observer and cause one to reflect on the heroic nature of the conflict. The naturalism with which the figures are engraved and the sense of dramatic tension created in these designs argue that they may be considered examples of 'good' narrative art.²⁸

An aureus-type bearing the obverse legend **MAXIMIANUS P F AUG** and the reverse legend **VIRTUS AUGG** (mint mark **PR**) shows Hercules about to despatch Nessus (**Plate 15.14**).²⁹ On this type Nessus' hind legs are shown to have collapsed under the weight of Hercules who bends his left knee into the creature's back. Nessus' right foreleg braces his body, while his left is arched as if in an attempt to regain balance. His arched foreleg is compositionally balanced by his left arm which is raised against the hero's hold on his head. While these points of pose and composition suggest an interest in artistic concerns on the part of the die-engraver, he has failed to create a naturalistic depiction. The proportions and overall

²⁸ The various 'Hercules and the Nemean lion' designs carried on these types issued from the Mint of Rome may be compared with types struck in Maximian's name in Gaul (for example **HCC IV**, Plate 55.39 - 42; see **Plate 15.13**), and coin-types issued by Postumus (see Appendix Three, The 'Labours of Hercules Series' Issued by Postumus at the Mint of Cologne, Figure E.i - ii).

²⁹ Foville 1903, p.368 and Pl.XVIII.6, and Brauer 1910, Taf.V.17.

composition of the figures of Hercules are so poorly handled as to make the designs visually unconvincing. The hero's raised knee is so diminutive as to appear absurd, and the left arm has been elongated to unnatural proportions in order to reach the centaur's head. His head and arms are shown from a side view, his body and right leg from a frontal view, and the various components of his body thus portrayed fail to integrate into an organic whole. The design may be judged 'poor' narrative, for it lacks visual credence and fails to invoke an emotional response from the viewer.

In the period prior to the Reforms of Diocletian, a 'Hercules and the Cerynaian stag' design was carried on an aureus-type (Plate 15.15).³⁰ The hero is shown on the left, facing right. His large left leg is extended, resting on a ground-line with his club behind, while his right is bent into the hind-quarters of the fallen stag. Hercules is depicted holding an antler in each hand as if attempting to wrench the creature's neck backward. In response to this attack the stag's left foreleg arches, while its right is bent beneath its body. While these features of the figures' poses suggest the physical nature of their conflict, the die-artist would appear not to have mastered the limited scale afforded by the coin-flan. The Cerynaian stag is depicted on a

³⁰ Foville 1903, Plate XVIII.7. HCC IV, p.clxxxiv notes that the subject of Hercules and the stag was also carried on a quinarius-reverse. It is assumed that this coin corresponds to Cohen 1880, Maximien Hercule 597, and Gneccchi 1912, Massimiano Erculeo Number 54. Bastien 1972, p.124, Number 46 (see Plate 15.16) attributes this coin to the Mint of Lugdunum, and this attribution is accepted in this thesis. For discussion of the 'Hercules and the Cerynaian stag' type issued at Rome in the name of Maximian after the Reforms of Diocletian, see below Note 34 and Plate 15.25.

diminished scale, and, in comparison with a piece struck in the name of Constantius I at Ticinum depicting the same scene (**Plate 15.18**),³¹ the beast here shown would appear to pose little threat to the hero. In effect, the design lacks a sense of dramatic physical conflict.

In the period after the Reforms of Diocletian two further mythological narrative types were struck in Maximian's name at the Mint of Rome. One aureus-type bearing the reverse legend **HERCULI DEBELLAT** (mint mark **PROM**) depicts Hercules fighting the Lernaean Hydra (**Plate 15.21**).³² Standing upon a small base-line which forms an exergue in the lower region of the coin-field, Hercules is shown naked, striding to the left, with his right arm raised above his head holding a club. With his left arm, which is bent back towards the right, he appears to hold one of the hydra's heads as he prepares to dispatch the creature. The body of the hydra is shown coiled around the hero's right leg with its heads rising in a circular pattern around his waist and torso. The body of

³¹ Foville 1903, p.369 discusses several possible prototypes for these designs. See also **Figure XXVIII**. Many coin-types minted during the period of the Late Third Century outside Rome also depict Hercules and the stag. For example a coin of Probus minted at Siscia (Kent 1978, Plate 145.547 and p.320, where it is erroneously attributed to the Mint of Rome), coin-types issued at Cologne under Postumus (see Appendix Three, The 'Labours of Hercules Series' Issued by Postumus at the Mint of Cologne, **Figure E.iv - vi**), a coin issued in the name of Constantius I as Caesar from the Mint of Trier (**HCC V**, Plate 12.2; see **Plate 15.17**), and a gold piece minted at Ticinum in the name of Constantius I (Babelon and Duquenoy 1924, Plate VIII.8; see **Plate 15.18**). Also see above Note 30 and **Plate 15.16** for a quinarius-type of the Mint of Lugdunum.

³² **HCC V**, Maximian 8.40. Also see Cohen 1880, Maximien Hercule 253.

the hero appears organic and is well muscled, especially on the left leg and upper torso. These features, combined with the interesting pose of the hero as he grapples with the sinuous, entwining body of the monster, attracts the attention of the viewer. Thus, from the narrative point of view, this illustration of one of Hercules' Labours is an artistically satisfactory depiction in the monoscenic mode.³³

The aureus-type of Maximian bearing the reverse legend **VIRTUS AUGG** (mint mark **PROM**) showing Hercules in combat with the Cerynaian Stag (Plate 15.25),³⁴ is artistically somewhat more successful than that issued in his name prior to the Reforms of Diocletian (Plate 15.15). While the position of the stag and hero within the field of this later type is very similar to that of the earlier example, points of detail and pose are different.³⁵ Hercules' body

³³ Hercules' battle with the hydra was depicted on several coin-types and a medallion of an approximately contemporaneous date from other mints, including a coin-type of Maximian minted at Ticinum bearing the obverse legend **MAXIMIANUS P. AUG**, and the reverse legend **HERCULI DEBELLAT** (mint mark **PT**), (Cohen 1880, *Maximien Hercule* 253; see Plate 15.22), a coin-type of Diocletian struck at Siscia bearing the obverse legend **IMP. C.C. VAL. DIOCLETIANUS P.F. AUG**, and the reverse legend **HERCULI DEBELLAT** (mint mark **SIS**), (Cohen 1880, *Diocletien* 139, and Brauer 1910, *Taf.II.14*; see Plate 15.23), and on a medallion from the same mint bearing the obverse legend **IMP C MAXIMIANUS P F AUG**, and the reverse legend **HERCULI DEBELLATORI** (mint mark **SIS**), (Gnecchi 1912, *Tav.126.5*, and *LIMC V, Herakles* p.41, n. 2088; see Plate 15.24). Compositional similarities between these various types and a coin of Postumus minted at Cologne as part of his 'Labours of Hercules Series' depicting the same conflict suggest the possibility that die-engravers of Maximian and Diocletian may have used Postumus' as a prototype (see Appendix Three, *The 'Labours of Hercules Series' Issued by Postumus at the Mint of Cologne*, Figure E.iii).

³⁴ *HCC V, Maximian* 8.41.

³⁵ For example whereas the earlier type (Plate 15.15) simply showed the hero's club, on this type (Plate 15.25) it is shown draped with the lion-skin.

here appears more robust and muscled, and while his head and right leg are somewhat ill-proportioned, it is represented in a reasonably organic manner. He is depicted leaning across the beast's back, pushing it into a crouched position. Thus there is an increased space in the flan which the die-engraver has employed to depict the stag's antlers.³⁶ While the actual body of the stag is not depicted on a larger scale than in the earlier types, the increased size of its antlers serves to heighten the sense of physical threat posed by the creature. In comparison with the earlier types (Plate 15.15 - 16), this design with its more naturalistic rendering of the body of the hero and increased degree of violent action is, from the narrative point of view, more successful.

C) CONSTANTINE I

The city of Constantinople was formally dedicated on the eleventh of May, A.D. 330.³⁷ To celebrate the founding of the city, and to highlight its continuity with the traditional capital of the Roman world, Constantine caused the striking of two major series of

³⁶ It is interesting to note that these poses are more closely paralleled by those depicted on the 'Hercules and the Cerynaian stag' type of Postumus and the medallion of Constantius I than are those of the pre-reform Diocletian types. See above Note 31.

³⁷ Kent 1978(b), p.105.

coins throughout the empire, the **URBS ROMA** and **CONSTANTINOPOLIS** series.³⁸

Of the reverse types issued as part of the **URBS ROMA** series, two subjects are worthy of some attention. One of these, known from medallions and coins, is the traditional 'She-wolf and Twins' motif, the other, known only from the medallion-flan, depicted Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius fleeing Troy. Neither subject is innovative, both had been celebrated since Republican times.³⁹ However the die-engraver of one of the medallions of the series bearing a 'She-wolf and Twins' type did introduce some new compositional features.

The basic composition of the 'She-wolf and Twins' type issued between A.D. 330 and 347 on coinage from the Mint of Rome was very similar to that issued by mints through the empire (Plate 16.1).⁴⁰ The figure of the she-wolf is highly schematic. Her overlong snout, sharply pointed ears, straight back, unmuscled body

³⁸ Kent 1978(b), p.105 argues that; "It is abundantly clear that all mints were instructed to issue the commemorative types without stint, and that the authorities were prepared to accept a substantial reduction in the numismatic advertisement of the rulers themselves. The extent of this apparant restraint should not however be overestimated; the important coinages in gold and silver continued exclusively to honour the Emperor and his sons."

³⁹ The 'She-wolf and twins' motif appeared on Republican, Flavian, Hadrianic, Antonine, Philipic and Gallienic issues, and the 'Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius fleeing Troy' type is known from Antoninus Pius' coins and medallions.

⁴⁰ RIC VIII, Plate 8.55. A mint mark occupies the lower portion of the field, with two stars above the she-wolf.

and stiff legs render her a totally inorganic. Likewise the anatomical features of the twins have been reduced to simplistic shapes. Circles, for example, represent their heads. The whole design is totally lacking visual credence, and is purely symbolic in conception and purpose.

Of the medallions issued from the Mint of Rome belonging to the **URBS ROMA** series, two distinct reverse types of the 'She-wolf and Twins' motif have been noted.⁴¹ The first belongs to the period between A.D. 330 and 337, the second to the period between A.D. 340 and 350.⁴²

The first of these reverse types was issued in conjunction with three different obverse types (Plate 16.2 - 4).⁴³ It depicts the she-wolf facing to the right suckling the twins. Above her rises a semi-circular feature representing a cave.⁴⁴ Two stars are depicted in the upper region of the medallion-flan, and on either side of the cave a shepherd holding a crook is shown, facing inwards to view the she-wolf and twins. The figures possibly represent Faustulus, the royal

⁴¹ See Kent 1978(b), pp.105f.

⁴² See Kent 1978(b), pp.105f. Vermeule 1978, p.178, has noted that the 'She-wolf and Twins' motif was also depicted on the obverse of medallion-types issued under Maximian and Constantius II. On such types the motif is shown as a shield decoration.

⁴³ Gnechi 1912, Tav.132.9 - 11. Cohen 1880, Rome 21. LIMC IV Faustulus p.131, n.13.

⁴⁴ This feature is also known from Antonine coin-types, see Chapters Four.A, p.71 - 72, Five.A, p.178, and Plates 6.3, .6, and 12.11.

shepherd of Amulius, and a companion. It is of interest to reflect that this type, one of the last mythological types to be issued by the Mint of Rome, shares several artistic features with one of the first such types issued by the moneyer Sex.Pompeius between 137 and 125 B.C. (**Plate 1.5**).⁴⁵ Sex.Pompeius' type, like this Late Imperial medallion, depicted the actual moment in which the twins were discovered and thereby gave the traditional 'She-wolf and Twins' motif (which stood as an eternal symbol outside strict temporal bounds) a momentary quality. On the **URBS ROMA** medallion-type this temporal quality is further enhanced by the poses of the two shepherds. One, standing to the right, extends his right arm in an attitude of surprise, while the figure on the left appears to be about to run off, his right leg and arm bent in an attitude of motion and his head turned to the right to face his gesturing companion. The poses of the shepherds reflect the die-engraver's interest in depicting interaction between these two elements of the composition, and their well-rounded bodies appear fairly organic.

From the narrative point of view the type is of some interest, for despite the schematic representation of the she-wolf's grotto and the apparent latitudinal symmetry of the design, artistic details such as the different poses of the two shepherds raise the design above a strict heraldic composition. Their interaction enhances the momentary quality created by their presence, and stimulates interest

⁴⁵ See Chapter One, pp.6 - 8.

in their act of discovering Romulus and Remus. The design may be considered an example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction, illustrative of a specific legendary event known from external references.⁴⁶ The die-engraver of this 'She-wolf and Twins' medallion-type was the last from the Mint of Rome to introduce any innovative features into mythological numismatic production. The final such types, which were also carried on medallion-flans, were direct copies of earlier works.

Between A.D. 340 and 347 a further type depicting the 'She-wolf and Twins' motif was issued at Rome (Plate 16.5),⁴⁷ and re-struck again between A.D. 348 and 350 (Plate 16.6).⁴⁸ Compositional features of this design are similar to those of the coin-type, with the she-wolf depicted facing to the left and the twins suckling beneath with two stars above. A similar type, showing the body of the she-wolf reversed to face to the right, was also issued during this period (Plate 16.7).⁴⁹ While the figures of the she-wolf and twins appear somewhat more naturalistic on the medallions than on the coins, perhaps owing to the increased size of the flan and increased attention to artistic detail on the part of the medallion-engravers, these types are of limited narrative interest.

⁴⁶ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita Book Liv.6 - 8.

⁴⁷ Gneecchi 1912, Tav.132.7.

⁴⁸ Kent 1978(b), p.110, and Gneecchi 1912, Tav.132.8.

⁴⁹ RIC VII, Plate 8.316. Also HCC V, p.334, and MacDonald 1906, p.122.

The second mythological subject of the **URBS ROMA** series was depicted on medallions issued by Constantine I to celebrate the founding of Constantinopolis, and has survived on a very worn medallion (**Plate 16.8**).⁵⁰ From the now faint outlines the design can be recognized as showing Aeneas, bearing Anchises on his shoulders and with his right hand leading Ascanius who stands to the left. The basic composition appears very similar to that used on Antonine medallions and coins issued during Antoninus Pius' third consulship as part of his 'programme series' (**Plate 10.2 - 5**).⁵¹ While the depiction of Aeneas' flight from Troy, an event which was to lead ultimately to the founding of the city of Rome, is in thematic sympathy with Constantine I's founding of the new capital, the artistic features of this medallion are impossible to ascertain. Nevertheless it represents one of the latest examples of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction to appear on the Imperial medallions.⁵²

⁵⁰ Cohen 1880, Rome 13, RIC VIII, p.334 Number 317, and Gnecci 1912, Tav.132.12.

⁵¹ See Chapter Four.B.ii, pp.110f., and **Plate 10.2 - 5**. For copies of the type made by contorniate-engravers, see Chapter Seven.B, p.270, and **Plate 22.5 - .6**.

⁵² For a discussion of a possible explanation as to how Antonine medallion-types survived to be used by the die-makers of Constantine I, see below Note 55.

D) CONSTANTIUS II

The final expression of mythological narrative art in the Imperial era to be officially issued by the Mint of Rome was struck between A.D. 337 and 340 (?) by the emperor Constantius II (**Plate 16.9 - 11**).⁵³ This bronze medallion bears the obverse legend **D N CONSTANTIUS P F AUG** and the reverse legend **SABINAE**. The reverse is a direct copy of the **SABINAE** type issued in the name of Faustina the Elder between A. D. 141 and 144 as part of the 'programme series' of Antoninus Pius (**Plate 11.9**).⁵⁴ Being a direct copy, the Constantian example tells us little of the artistry of the later Imperial medallion-engravers other than the fact that they possessed the technical skill to reproduce the design. Although copied, the Constantian example successfully captures the detail and sense of dramatic tension which made the original design so visually stimulating.

The reproduction of the Antonine type says much about the attitudes of the emperor Constantius II or his agents who commissioned it, and raises several interesting points. How did the

⁵³ Toynbee 1942, Plate VII.7; see **Plate 16.9**, Cabinet des Médailles, Number 3.45.730 (bis.); see **Plate 16.10**. Gnechi 1912, Tav. 136.9; see **Plate 16.11**. For copies of the type made by contorniate-engravers, see Chapter Seven.A, pp.223 - 224, and **Plate 17.1 - 4**.

⁵⁴ See Chapter Four.B.iii, pp.140 - 143.

original Antonine example survive to attract official interest in the late empire? Why should a design originally struck almost two hundred years before and depicting the pagan legend of the Rape of the Sabines be considered worthy of re-issue in the Christian empire? In regard to the mechanics involved in the type's survival, Toynbee's argument for the existence of an archive within the Mint of Rome where 'proofs' or dies were stored suggests the possibility that the engravers of Constantine I and Constantius II may have had access to original Antonine medallion-dies.⁵⁵ While the reasons why such 'proofs' attracted official interest after a period of over one hundred and sixty years are uncertain, the medallion-types copied under Constantine I have a clear thematic relationship with his URBS

⁵⁵ Toynbee 1944(b), pp.72 - 73. In her review of Alföldi 1943, Toynbee 1945, p.116, argues "... the fact that the contorniates with the Sabinae type show the exergue legend SABINAE in full [see Plate 17.1 - .4], whereas the corresponding bronze medallions of Constantius II show it incomplete, does not prove conclusively, as Alföldi maintains, that the smaller medallions were copied from a type originally intended for the larger contorniates and therefore these contorniates date from before Constantius's death in 361. Both were copied from the original large bronze medallion type of Faustina I ...[see Plate 11.9]". While the medallions reproduced by Toynbee (see Plate 16.9) and Gneecchi (see Plate 16.11) do show the legend to be indistinct, on those pieces held in the Cabinet des Médailles, Numbers 3.45.730 - .730(bis.) it is complete. As the Antonine original is several millimetres larger than the medallion-flans of Constantius II reproduced by Toynbee and Gneecchi, it is likely that the section of the legend indistinct on these examples might be explained as the result of the fourth century engravers making use of the original die and striking it onto a slightly smaller flan. Thus the SABINAE type of Constantius II would appear to provide further evidence for the survival of dies in an archive within the Mint of Rome, as suggested by Toynbee 1944(b), pp.72 - 73. Vermeule 1952, p.357, notes that die-engravers of Constantius II also appear to copy a Hadrianic aureus carrying a 'Victory' type (Gneecchi 1912, Tavv. 136.11 and 139.4), and, p.356, suggests the existence of a 'reference collection and file' of older issues being maintained at the Mint of Rome. For an interesting parallel of the survival of a 'die', see Aulock 1976, pp.65 - 67 where a piece at the Mint of Dalisandos survived for a period of some 80 years to be re-used. Franke 1975, finds that between A.D. 161/162 and 168/169 various dies were re-used, suggesting that they too were housed in some form of 'reference collection'.

ROMA series, and some possible reasons for the re-issuing of the SABINAE type under Constantius II have been presented.⁵⁶

The historian Ammianus Marcellinus provides a most interesting account of Constantius II's visit to the city of Rome in A.D. 357.⁵⁷ He records:

Multis igitur cum stupore visis horrendo, imperator
de fama querebatur, ut invalida vel maligna,
quod augens omnia semper in maius, erga haec
explicanda quae Romae sunt obsolescit, delib-
ransque diu quid ibi ageret, urbis addere statuit
ornamentis, ut in maximo circo erigeret obeliscum.

Book XVI. 10. 17.

This passage is significant for two reasons. Firstly, assuming its accuracy, it shows that the emperor himself held the heritage of the city in awe and helps to explain why a type celebrating a legendary

⁵⁶ Horvath 1928, p.139, has suggested that the original type issued in the name of Faustina the Elder may have had significance beyond its legendary interest and represented a dramatization of the event, such as that mentioned by Tertullian in *De Spectaculis* Book V. Toynbee 1944, p.185 poses the question, "... did this show survive into the middle of the fourth century of our era? If so, it would be an interesting example of the survival of pagan customs in the capital of a now officially Christian Empire." Even assuming Horvath's views and (less likely?) the possibility suggested by Toynbee, it would seem curious that Constantius II should choose to celebrate a pagan legend simply because it survived in the form of a dramatic festival.

⁵⁷ Also see Toynbee 1942, p.47, and Toynbee 1944(b), p.121.

event of pagan times should be struck by a Christian emperor. Secondly the specific action he took in erecting an obelisk in the Circus Maximus suggests that the choice of the **SABINAE** type may have been directly inspired by this action and celebrated the event. In Book XVII Ammianus Marcellinus gives much detail of the actual transportation and erection of the obelisk, and its inscriptions. The length of his description suggests that the event was perceived as a significant occasion worthy of note, and this adds weight to the argument that the medallion may have been struck as part of the celebrations of the event.

SUMMARY

During the period of over three hundred years between the joint reigns of Septimius Severus and Caracalla in A.D. 206, when the 'Hercules and the Potitii and Pinarii' coin-types were issued,⁵⁸ and A.D. 337/340 when Constantius II issued the last narrative type from the Mint of Rome, examples of Imperial mythological numismatic narrative types were restricted to the reigns of four emperors. The reign of Gallienus witnessed a revival of interest in mythological depictions in general. Among the mythological types struck during his principate were medallions of narrative interest bearing the

⁵⁸ See Chapter Five.C, pp.188 - 191, and Plate 14.4 - 5.

reverse legend **PIETAS FALERI** depicting Jupiter and Amalthea were issued (**Plate 15.6 - 7**). Maximian's coin-types depicting some of the Labours of Hercules are similarly noteworthy (**Plate 15.8 - 12, .14 - 15, .21, and .25**), and serve to highlight a general trend in mythological numismatic depiction after the reign of Antoninus Pius - the increasing use of the coinage to carry such designs. Constantine the Great's **URBS ROMA** series of coins and medallions was the final series of mythological depictions to be celebrated by numismatic pieces issued by the Mint of Rome. While some of his types were borrowed from earlier reigns, the **URBS ROMA** series was to witness the last innovative narrative design to be carried by Imperial medallions (**Plate 16.2 - 4**). Constantius II's re-issuing of one of Faustina the Elder's **SABINAE** medallion-types was to be the final example of Roman Imperial mythological narrative to be issued by the Mint of Rome (**Plate 16.9 - 11**). Numismatic celebration of mythological events passed to the unofficially produced contorniates which were to continue to be manufactured until the late fifth century.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CONTORNIATES

**A) MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVE ART ON
CONTORNIATE-TYPES OF THE 'FIRST GREAT
STRIKING'**

**B) MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVE ART ON
CONTORNIATE-TYPES OF THE 'SECOND GREAT
STRIKING'**

**C) MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVE ART ON CAST
CONTORNIATE-TYPES**

The contorniates, the most curious and significant class of Roman 'pseudo moneta',¹ became the medium for the final expression of mythological numismatic narration in the Roman Imperial period. They were the last pieces to present the Roman people with the tradition of numismatic celebrations of mythological events, a tradition which has flowered centuries before during the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. While such subjects disappeared from the official coins and medallions after the reign of Constantius II, the contorniates continued to celebrate them until the reign of Anthemius.²

The physical characteristics of contorniates differentiate them from officially produced coins and medallions, a factor which raises the question of where such pieces were manufactured.³ Stevenson

¹ Eckhel 1798, p.277, Stevenson 1889. p.271, and Alföldi 1990, pp.7 - 10. Melville Jones 1990, p.258, suggests that this term is now 'out of date'.

² Stevenson 1889, pp.276 - 277, records that Duncange and Pinkerton had dated contorniates to the reigns of the emperors depicted on the obverses of some types. Writers such as Eckhel, Morel and Mahudel date them to the period from Constantine I to Placidius Valentinian III, after whose reign "...contorniates almost wholly cease." (p.276). McDowall 1906, p.246, records that "Contorniates are usually assigned to the period between Constantine the Great and Anthemius, a space of little more than a hundred and fifty years;". Evidence presented by Alföldi 1943, which he uses to fix the date of the first contorniate's manufacture to A.D. 356 has been questioned by Toynbee 1945, p.116, who argues that, "Since some bear contemporary portraits of reigning emperors from Theodosius I and Arcadius to Anthemius, it is certain that contorniates were being produced during a period running from the last two decades of the fourth century to the early seventies of the fifth... The style of [some contorniates] ... suggests that the series may well have been initiated some twenty or thirty years before the beginning of the joint reign of Theodosius and Arcadius in 383. The late fifties of the fourth century are, indeed, a not unlikely date on general historical grounds."

³ Eckhel 1798, pp.278 - 287 categorizes contorniates by the following characteristics: that they display circular furrows on their obverse and reverse, they display monograms in close proximity to the obverse portrait, they were made of
(Continued. ...

noted that in his day it was "... universally admitted, that they were not struck by public authority, but by private individuals, and those of an uneducated class, since the types are generally borrowed from humble life, objects the most incongruous placed in juxtaposition, and mistakes committed in orthography, which preclude the inference of their proceeding from public authority."⁴ Alföldi called this view into question, stating that the contorniates were issued from the officinae of the Mint of Rome.⁵ Toynbee, however, argues that "... in the absence of definite evidence either way it would be more natural to suppose that these 'pseudo-monetae' were turned out from an establishment other than that which produced the normal coinage."⁶

While the specific purpose of these pieces is the subject of debate,⁷ "It can hardly be doubted that all contorniates, with the

brass, and while their size is similar to that of official medallions, they are of thinner brass and hence weigh less. Also their workmanship is distinct, exhibiting the use of very low relief and varied degrees of artistic merit. Also see Stevenson 1889, p.271, and Melville Jones 1990, pp.71 - 72.

⁴ Stevenson 1889, p.227.

⁵ Alföldi 1943, pp.12 - 13. Kapossy 1971/72, p.129 follows Alföldi in regard to this argument.

⁶ Toynbee 1945, p.116.

⁷ While discussion of the specific purpose of the contorniates is outside the scope of this thesis, it may be noted that the number of types relating to venationes, gladiatorial combats, horse racing and dramatic performances has led most writers to assume a relationship with the celebration of ludi. The contorniates have been variously described as entrance-tickets, prizes or tokens. Alföldi 1937, p.39 and p.41, Alföldi 1943, pp.48 - 57, and Alföldi 1990, pp.25f. argues that they were issued by the pagan Roman aristocracy as anti-Christian propaganda. Kapossy 1971/72 p.129 follows Alföldi's argument. Toynbee 1945, p.120 rejects this view, and suggests that they were given to the people as 'mementoes' of the show. See below Note 138. For discussion on the possible uses of the contorniates, also see, Stevenson 1889, p.277, Gneecchi 1903, pp.186 - 190, McDowall 1906, pp.232 - (Continued. ...

possible exception of the small group bearing portraits of Theodosius I and Arcadius..., were struck or cast in Rome."⁸

Unlike the Imperial die-artists of the officially minted coins and medallions who typically employed obverse portraits of reigning emperors and titular legends, the contorniate-engravers commonly used obverse portraits of long-dead personalities on their types. The date of production of individual pieces cannot, therefore, be assigned within an absolute chronology. Alföldi's relative chronology of contorniate striking⁹ provides a basic structure for discussion, and for the purpose of this thesis narrative mythological contorniate-types will be divided into three categories: those which belong to the period of the 'First Great Striking', those which belong to the 'Second Great Striking',¹⁰ and the cast examples. Within these categories, types common to both major periods of striking will be

245, Dressel 1906, p.60, MacDonald 1909, p.19, Alföldi 1937, pp.39 - 41, Toynbee 1940, pp.234f., Mabbott 1953, pp. 248 - 250, Sachero 1964, pp.8f., Sachero 1987, pp.28f., and Melville Jones 1990, p.72.

⁸ Toynbee 1945, p.116. Also see Alföldi 1943, p.23 and Alföldi 1990, pp.12f.

⁹ Alföldi 1976, pp.217 - 232. Alföldi's relative chronology is based on struck contorniates only. Generally such pieces are divided by Alföldi into two major groups: 'Die Erste Grosse Stempelfolge', consisting of pieces struck between the reigns of Constantius II and Theodosius I, and 'Die Zweite Grosse Stempelfolge', consisting of pieces struck between c. A.D. 410 and 467/72. See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm I and II. The premiss on which Alföldi's relative chronology is based is that obverse and reverse types were used sequentially. Examples carrying unique types cannot, therefore be placed within Alföldi's chronology. See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm III.A - B. Cast contorniates, accounting for approximately one quarter of the total number of surviving types, are also excluded from Alföldi's chronology.

¹⁰ These periods correspond to those identified by Alföldi, see Note 9 above.

examined in the discussion of contorniate-types of the first period, for such pieces belonging to the later period appear to copy those of the earlier. Struck types outside Alföldi's relative chronology will be examined in the light of pieces with similar subject matter or artistic features which are included in his chronology.

A) MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVE ART ON CONTORNIATE-TYPES OF THE 'FIRST GREAT STRIKING'

The trend of official die-engravers to copy the mythological types of earlier periods, a practice particularly evident on coins and medallions issued at Rome after the Reforms of Diocletian,¹¹ can also be seen reflected on several contorniate-types, including the first mythological type of the period of the 'First Great Striking'. A **SABINAE** type of Faustina the Elder, originally issued as part of Antoninus Pius' 'programme series' (**Plate 11.9**),¹² and later copied on medallions of Constantius II (**Plate 16.9 - 11**)¹³ was also carried on several contorniates (**Plate 17.1 - 4**).¹⁴

¹¹ See Chapter Six.B - D.

¹² See Chapter Four.B.iii, pp.140 - 142.

¹³ See Chapter Six.D, pp.215f.

¹⁴ Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 21.7 - 8, 167.7, 180.10, and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 258.5; see **Plate 17.1**. Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 67.4 - 12, 68.1 - 4, and Alföldi 1990, Tafeln 216.6 - 7, 258.4; see **Plate 17.2 - 3**. Tafel 68.9; see **Plate 17.4**. Alföldi 1976, p.202, Diagramm I, divides the struck **SABINAE** contorniates into two groups within 'Die Erste Grosse Stempelfolge' - the first being represented by that here reproduced as **Plate 17.1**, the second by those here reproduced as **Plate 17.2 - 3**. That classified by Alföldi 1976, p.166 as, 'Geprägte, aber Durch Umgravierung
(Continued. ...

Toynbee suggests that coin- and medallion-dies may have served as direct models for contorniate-types;¹⁵ however it should be noted that the surviving contorniate design-types which copy the Antonine SABINAE type are not exact reproductions. While from the narrative point of view these contorniates closely parallel their medallic prototype, their artistic qualities are somewhat diminished and appear to reflect a general lack of finely detailed engraving on the part of the contorniate-makers. For example the human figures represented on such contorniates appear more robust and their drapery less fine than on their prototype, a feature particularly noticeable on one of the SABINAE design-types (Plate 17.3).

The earliest mythological types of the 'First Great Striking' of contorniates not to be copied from earlier, officially minted types depict heroic figures engaged in combat with centaurs. One type was struck in conjunction with obverse-types showing portraits of Trajan

Verfälschte Kontorniate' has been reproduced in this thesis as Plate 17.4. Close examination of the poses and proportions of the various figures carried on these pieces suggest that they were struck from slightly different dies. An artistic feature of the contorniates, most uncommon on the coins and medallions issued by the official mint, is the number of minor discrepancies which can be observed between contorniates bearing very similar depictions. For the purpose of this thesis examples of contorniates where major iconographical and compositional features are shared, but where minor discrepancies in the pose or proportion of the figures or other minor difference between pieces exist, will be termed 'design-type', the term 'type' being used to indicate a distinctive iconographical composition.

¹⁵ Toynbee 1944(b), p.72. Also see Alföldi 1990, p.162.

and Alexander the Great (**Plate 17.5**),¹⁶ the second in conjunction with obverse-types of Alexander and Omphale (**Plate 17.6**).¹⁷

While heroic accoutrements which would specifically identify the scene are not depicted on the first type (**Plate 17.5**), it is likely that the hero depicted is Hercules. He is shown standing to the right with his head held firmly against the centaur's chest. The centaur holds the hero around the throat with his right arm, grasping the hero's right arm with his left. On the second type (**Plate 17.6**), a fallen club shown to the left identifies the hero depicted as Hercules. He stands in the centre of the flan, facing right. His right leg braces against the thrust of the centaur which is shown rearing to the right. Hercules' arms are depicted holding the right arm of the beast but, with its head flung wildly backward, his foe appears to be grasping for his hair with its left arm.

The physical effort of battle is clearly demonstrated by the poses of the figures on both types. On the first the centaur has fallen back on his haunches and the hero's well muscled body is bent, throwing his weight against that of his foe. On the second Hercules appears to be struggling to maintain his grip on the beast. These heroic figures are not shown triumphant, but engaged in the heat of battle and apparently in some stress. This has the effect of adding some degree

¹⁶ Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 5.6 - 7, 114.1 - 4, and Alföldi 1990, p.142.

¹⁷ Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 5.8, 23.9 - 11, and Alföldi 1990, pp.142 - 143.

of psychological drama to the physical tension of the scenes, and clearly shows that the ultimate triumph was hard-won.

A second feature of these contorniate-types is the degree of spatial depth suggested by the scenes. While many contorniate-types appear flat and visually restricted to the two-dimensional plane of the flan, these examples create a credible illusion of spatial depth. This has been achieved by the use of over-lapping planes of relief and landscape elements. On the first type the creature's right foreleg is shown extended towards the right, and the hero's left leg, reaching towards the left, is partially obscured from view by that of the centaur. The positioning of the figures on this type suggest that the hero is standing between the beast's legs. On the second type Hercules' body partially obscures that of the centaur behind him, and the beast's left hind-limb can be seen between the hero's parted legs, visually suggesting that the hero stands in front of the centaur. On both types landscape elements have been added to the design. On the first type a small tree is shown rising from a rocky outcrop to the extreme right, and another is shown to the left above the centaur's rump. A somewhat schematically represented bush is shown rising from the ground-line in the right-hand side of the flan of the second type. These elements have the effect of filling areas of the field which would otherwise be vacant and, to a limited degree, give a spatial setting to the action.

Two contorniate reverse design-types bearing the legend ΥΨΙ-ΠΥΛΗ show a female figure advancing to the right carrying an

infant, with another seated child holding forth snakes (Plate 17.7 - 8).¹⁸ On the basis of the flans' legend the scene has been identified as depicting the ill-fated Hypsipyle and Opheltes,¹⁹ but the iconography of the scene suggests that Hercules, Alcmena and Iphicles are shown.²⁰ The female figure, which dominates the design, is shown slightly to the right of the centre of the flan. Her body faces the viewer, her head turned sharply to the left to gaze at the scene of the child struggling against serpentine coils. The child, kneeling to the left, turns his head towards female to whom he holds forth reptiles, as if to indicate the source of his torment. Surviving written accounts of the legend of Hypsipyle and Opheltes record that Hypsipyle discovered Opheltes' plight on returning from showing the heroes a spring.²¹ On the contorniate design-types the female figure would appear to be moving away from the seated child, not returning to it. Furthermore the presence of the infant in the female's arms cannot be reconciled with details of the Hypsipyle and Opheltes story. It would seem that the contorniate-engravers responsible for these pieces have depicted Hercules, Alcmena and

¹⁸ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 144.3 - 6, and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 220.10; see Plate 17.7, and Tafeln 3.12, 24.8, 114.8, and 194.4; see Plate 17.8. The former pieces belong to the early period of 'Die Erste Grosse Stempelfolge', the latter to the end of 'Die Zweite Grosse Stempelfolge'. See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm I and II.

¹⁹ See Alföldi 1976, p.198, and Alföldi 1990, pp.137 - 138.

²⁰ LIMC IV *Herakles*, p.831, n.11664, suggests that the scene depicts "H.[erakles] seated to l.[eft] strangling snakes; woman (Alkmene) moving r.[ight] carrying baby. The inscription suggests Hypsipyle, but the iconography relates to H.[erakles], Alkmene and Iphikles."

²¹ See, for example, Apollodorus *The Library* III.vi.4

Iphicles, but combined their design with a legend which suggests a different identification of the figures.²² Whether this apparent error was due to carelessness or ignorance on the part of the engravers, or was the result of the die-makers borrowing a 'Hercules, Alcmena and Iphicles' prototype to satisfy their desire to depict Hypsipyle and Opheltes is impossible to ascertain.

From the narrative point of view the contorniate-engravers of these design-types have created an enhanced temporal quality in the design by depicting Alcmena(?) at the moment of discovering Hercules' (?) plight. Her legs arch, as if she has suddenly halted. Her body leans to the left and appears somewhat off balance, and her right hand is raised in a gesture signifying shock. The depiction of the infant Iphicles(?), clinging to her left shoulder, serves to emphasize her maternal nature. However the conflict created in the viewer's mind between the visual information given by the design and its explanatory legend greatly lessens the potential psychological impact of the scene.

The slaying of Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons, by Achilles was celebrated on several contorniates. Two basic compositions can be observed. One shows the hero advancing to the right supporting

²² See above Note 4. Toynbee 1944, p.234 notes: "Mythological scenes [on contorniates] sometimes appear with incongruous legends, as though the craftsman was ignorant of the true meaning of the type which he had portrayed."

the body of Penthesilea, the second shows the same group advancing to the left.

A reverse type depicting the figures moving to the right is known from a reverse coupled with an obverse type of Antoninus Pius (Plate 18.1(a) - (b)).²³ Achilles is shown naked but for a helmet and round shield. His left leg is bent beneath the weight of the Amazon's body, while his right is stretched out behind him. With his left arm he supports Penthesilea. She is depicted slumping forward to the right, her left arm still bearing a shield. Her legs, covered by drapery, lie in the area between the hero's striding legs. In the background a horse is depicted facing to the right.²⁴

The type described above, perhaps based on a statuary prototype,²⁵ appears to have undergone a process of copying and re-copying by contorniate-engravers, during which compositional elements have been misinterpreted. On several design-types the head and neck of the horse have been removed from the composition

²³ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 167.9; see Plate 18.1(a). Also Sabatier 1860, p.92 and Plate XIV.6; see Plate 18.1(b). Sabatier's engraving has been accepted by MacDonald 1909, p.45. See also Sachero 1964, p.15, n.16, and *LIMC* I, *Achilleus*, p.169, n.789.

²⁴ Examination of the piece reproduced by Alföldi 1976, Tafel 167.9 (see Plate 18.1(a)) at the British Museum (Number R4907), confirms that Sabatier's depiction of a horse's head in the upper right of the field is correct (see Sabatier 1860, Plate XIV.6; see Plate 18.1(b)). This feature is slightly obscured by a lump of corrosion.

²⁵ See below Note 33.

(Plate 18.2 - 4).²⁶ On one such design-type (Plate 18.2) Penthesilea's legs have been deleted, but a lower section of her torso remains in view.²⁷ On other design-types (Plate 18.3 - 4) the hero's shield and spear are omitted, and all of the Amazon's lower body is deleted. Her upper torso is combined with the remains of the horse's figure, thus creating a female centaur. That this change of subject from Achilles and Penthesilea to a warrior carrying a female centaur was the result of erroneous copying, rather than intent, is suggested by the apparently misinterpreted legend carried by one such design-type.²⁸

²⁶ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 120.9; see Plate 18.2, Tafel 120.8; see Plate 18.3, and Tafel 94.5; see Plate 18.4. This point of detail was noted by MacDonald 1909, p.46, note 46. Alföldi 1990, pp.153, suggests "Zum Unterschied von den Kontorniaten-Rs. Nr 77 [here represented by Plate 18.1(a) - 3] und 78 [here represented by Plate 18.4] wird aber gewöhnlich entweder das ganze Pferd oder nur der vordere Teil des Tieres abgebildet." It would appear, however, that the absence of the horse's head in examples classified by Alföldi as Nr.77 had not been noted. Within Alföldi's relative chronology, the design-types here reproduced as Plate 18.1(a) - 18.3 belong to 'Die Erste Grosse Stempelfolge' (Alföldi 1976, Diagramm I). The 'base' design-type (Plate 18.1(a)) was, according to Alföldi's chronology, the first of this group to be struck. That here represented by Plate 18.4 is known combined with one obverse type of Nero, and is not included in Alföldi's relative chronology. MacDonald 1909, pp.45 - 46, suggests that the apparent differences between the base design-type and others of the group are due to "... tooling away the horse's head and neck...." Personal inspection of pieces at the Cabinet des Médailles (Numbers 17279 and 17280) and the British Museum (Number R4906) has not convinced me that the noted omissions were due to tooling after striking. A misinterpretation on the part of contorniate-engravers copying from the 'base' design-type (Plate 18.1(a)) is more likely, especially in view of further changes to the design and errors in the legend of one design-type. See below Note 28.

²⁷ MacDonald 1909, p.46, note 46. This feature is most apparent on the piece held in the British Museum (Number R4906).

²⁸ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 94.5. This design-type is known only from an example on which it is coupled with an obverse-type of Nero. See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm III.B, and p.200. The reverse legend of this piece which is held in the Museo Archeologico, Venice (Number 952) is: ACIL[E disappeared]S-PEN[last letter very worn] -TESILEA. See also Alföldi 1990, p.153. MacDonald 1909, p.46, records the (same?) legend as AGIT SPE TESEUS, and suggests that it "... is
(Continued. ...

On examples of the second basic type, which shows the figures of Penthesilea and Achilles facing to the left with a large shield on the left, two design-types would appear to have survived.²⁹ On one, the figures and shield are shown in isolation (**Plate 18.5(a)**).³⁰ On the other (**Plate 18.6**)³¹ the figure of an animal, possibly a griffin,³² appears on the right of the flan, facing to the right.

These various 'Achilles and Penthesilea' types are significant from the narrative point of view. The finest, represented by the basic types (**Plate 18.1(a) - (b)** and **18.5(a) - 6**), illustrate a specific legendary event recorded in Aethiopsis, and are fine examples of the

almost certainly either a mis-reading or a meaningless alteration of the 'ACHILLIS PENTESILEA', which sometimes accompanies the original design."

²⁹ Alföldi 1976, p.200, and Alföldi 1990, pp.152 - 154, does not differentiate between these design-types. See below Notes 31 and 32.

³⁰ Cabinet des Médailles Number 17278; see **Plate 18.5(a)**. Sabatier 1860, Plate XIV.7; see **Plate 18.5(b)**, indicates a horse's head in the upper right of the field. On personal inspection of the example of this type held at the Cabinet des Médailles (Number 17278) I could not observe this feature. Stevenson 1889, p.273, describes a type as: "Achilles armed, raises from the ground the prostrate Penthesilea; behind is a horse also lying on the ground." Stevenson does not, however, illustrate or note the source of the type to which he is referring.

³¹ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 135.4. This design-type is known only from an example on which it is coupled with an obverse-type of Trajan and is not, therefore, included in Alföldi's relative chronology. See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm III.A.

³² Identification of the nature of the animal is problematical. Alföldi 1976, p.200, Number 79, and Alföldi 1990, pp.152 - 154, describes all examples showing the left-facing figures as depicting a diminutive horse. As noted above Sabatier 1860, Plate XIV.6, would appear to be incorrect in his inclusion of a horse's head in his line-drawing of the type. It would appear that the seated animal on this design-type (**Plate 18.6**) is a composite creature, with a lion's or dog's body, an eagle's beak, and a very large, serpentine tail - features which suggest it is a griffin.

monoscenic mode of narrative depiction. The poses of the figures, which are themselves well proportioned and naturalistic, vividly suggest the extreme pathos of the moment illustrated and encourage an emotional response from the viewer.³³

Furthermore the various design-types apparently derived from the basic type showing the group facing to the right (Plate 18.1(a) - (b)) provide evidence for a protracted copying process whereby contorniate-engravers, using the works of their peers as prototypes, introduced compositional and iconographic changes to a basic design. Due to such corruption the basic narrative design, illustrative of the specific legendary event of Achilles bearing Penthesilea, was reduced to a purely decorative representation of a human male carrying a female centaur. In the case of these design-types (Plate 18.2 - 4), erroneous copying severed the links between the internal artistic features of the designs and a specific external reference, thus rendering them non-narrative works devoid of any specific meaning.

Hero, priestess of Aphrodite at Sestos, and her lover Leander were depicted on several contorniate design-types (Plate 18.7 - 9).³⁴ Hero is depicted in the upper region of the left hand side of the

³³ The poses of the figures shown on these types are most similar to those of Achilles and Penthesilea known from a statue-type. Bieber 1955, Figures 278 - 280; see Figure XXIX.i - iii. For discussion of possible prototypes of these contorniate-designs see Alföldi 1990, pp.152 - 154.

³⁴ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 103.5 and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 222.8; see Plate 18.7, Tafeln 103.3 - 4, 6 - 7; see Plate 18.8, and Tafel 121.9 - 10; see Plate 18.9. Alföldi does not differentiate between the three design-types which have survived. On the first (Plate 18.7) a small, schematically represented ship is shown in the
(Continued. ...

field. Her lower body is hidden from view by a simple architectural feature representing a tower which is topped by a large, angled, block-like structure. Her left arm is bent and rests on the top of the tower, while in her extended right arm she holds forth a lamp to light Leander's way. Her lover's out-flung arms, head and torso are depicted in the lower field rising from sinuous engraved lines representing the waters of the Hellespont. This depiction of Leander would appear to be a close visual representation of Ovid's lines;

Iamque fatigatis umero sub utroque lacertis
fortiter in summas erigor altus aquas.
ut procul aspexi lumen, ...

Heroides XVIII. 83 - 85.

On the extreme left the figure of a crouching angler is depicted.³⁵ While the figure may have been meant to represent a 'typical' fisherman, the reference to Glaucus made by Hero in Ovid's Heroides suggests the possibility that the figure here represents him whom "... subito reddidit herba deum".³⁶ If so the figure may

upper field, perhaps symbolically representing the straits of the Hellespont. On this design-type the crouching figure (see below Note 35) clearly holds a rod. On the second design-type (Plate 18.8) the upper field is vacant, and Hero's head is turned to face Leander. On the third design-type (Plate 18.9) a figure of Cupid is shown in the upper field. See Stevenson 1889, p.274. Schlüter 1985, p.68, Abb.31 reproduces a worn (cast?) contorniate showing a reverse-type of Hero and Leander similar to the design-type here represented by Plate 18.8.

³⁵ The figure is identified as an angler by Stevenson 1889, p.274, and Alföldi 1976, p.198. Only on one design-type, here represented by Plate 18.7, can a rod be seen in the figure's hand.

³⁶ Ovid, Heroides XVIII.160.

serve to contrast Glaucus' passionate attachment to the sea with Leander's death in the waters, or be an allusion to the god's rejection by Scylla, another case of lost love.³⁷

While the 'Hero and Leander' design-types contain many points of visual interest, notably the swimming action of Leander,³⁸ from the narrative point of view one design-type (Plate 18.7) fails to suggest the psychological drama of the event - Leander's impending death. Hero's gaze and gesture with the lamp are here directed not at the figure of Leander, but towards the crouching angler. It would seem strange that she should so concentrate her attention, apparently ignoring her swimming lover. The change in Hero's pose noted on this design-type, an alteration which greatly detracts from the narrative impact of the composition, may reflect inaccurate copying from a prototype.³⁹

³⁷ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Book XIII.905f.

³⁸ In regards to its depiction of the action of swimming, these design-types may be compared with the Antonine COCLES type (Plate 11.1), and a contorniate-type, see Sabatier 1860, Plate XIII.14.

³⁹ The 'Hero and Leander' contorniate design-types may be compared with coins of Abydos issued under Commodus (Price 1971, p.129, Pl.25.15. Price 1981, p.73, Fig.5, and Schlüter 1985, pp.61 - 62; see Figure XXXII.i), Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Alexander Severus and Maximinus (Schlüter 1985, pp.63 - 67), and of Sestus under Septimius Severus and Caracalla (Price 1971, p.129. Price 1981, p.73, Fig.6, and Schlüter 1985, pp.59 - 61; see Figure XXXII.ii) and Alexander Severus (Schlüter 1985, p.61). The contorniate design-types may have been inspired by such coin-types, or (more likely?) by a wall-painting. The story of the two lovers was, for example, celebrated on a wall-painting in Pompeii (see Price 1971, p.129, and Schlüter 1985, p.54, Abb.5) suggesting a similar depiction may have inspired a contorniate-engraver. It is interesting to note that of the Abydos type of Commodus, Price 1971, p.129 suggests "...the Eros lighting the way with his torch recalls vividly a passage in Statius [i, 2, 87.] where this is expressly mentioned." This figure can also be seen on one of the contorniate design-types (Plate 18.9).

The depiction of three human figures struggling against serpentine coils identifies the scene carried on the reverses of several contorniates as illustrations of Athena's revenge on Laocoon and his sons (Plate 18.10 - 12).⁴⁰ Three design-types have been identified, with slight compositional and proportional differences observable between the various examples.⁴¹ The poses of the figures suggest the dramatic and violent nature of this legendary event recorded by Vergil;

illi agmine certo
 Laocoonta petunt; et primum parva duorum
 corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque
 implicat et miseros morsu depascitur artus;
 post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem,
 corripunt spirisque ligant ingentibus

Aeneid II . 212 - 217

Laocoon himself is depicted in the centre of the flans, his body facing the viewer with arms and legs out-spread and his cape flowing

⁴⁰ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 63.8; see Plate 18.10. Tafeln 74.2, 104.12, 121.1; see Plate 18.11. Tafeln 78.11 - 12, 79.1 - 3; see Plate 18.12.

⁴¹ Alföldi 1976, p.201, Numbers 87 - 89. Two of the design-types, here represented by Plates 18.10 - 11, are identified by Alföldi 1976, Diagramm I, as belonging to 'Die Erste Grosse Stempelfolge', while the third (Plate 18.12) is identified as belonging to 'Die Zweite Grosse Stempelfolge' (Alföldi 1976, Diagramm II). See also Alföldi 1990, p.158.

out in thick folds of drapery behind him.⁴² Despite the dramatic positioning of the figure's limbs, his over-large head and shoulders are so out of proportion to the rest of his body as to appear most unnaturalistic. Similarly his two sons, entwined in the serpents' deadly coils, are entirely out of scale with the figure of their father. The terribly ill-proportioned representations of the figures of the three Trojans renders the design-types totally lacking in visual credence. While general points of composition suggest the violent nature of the scene, the inorganic and incredible manner in which the design-types have been executed render them 'poor' narrative art.

Several design-types depicting Circe's supplication to Ulysses can be identified, differentiated by changes in the proportions of the figures and the representation of Circe's crown (Plate 19.1 - 3).⁴³ Circe is shown on the right, kneeling with her hands outstretched to hold Ulysses' right calf, a scene illustrative of Homer's lines:

⁴² MacDonald 1909, p.38, suggests that sinuous lines shown to the left of the field, are waves indicating the sea from which the serpent issued forth.

⁴³ Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 33.1 - 3, 69.1, 212.7; see Plate 19.1. Tafel 31.2 and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 214.10; see Plate 19.2. Tafel 121.7 - 8; see Plate 19.3. Alföldi 1976, p.200, differentiates between two design-types (here represented by Plate 19.1 - 2), based on slight difference between the poses and proportions of the figures. While he does not differentiate between the pieces here represented by Plates 19.1 and 19.3, it would appear that the architectural elements and background figures of the former are missing from the latter. Whether this is the result of wear or an intended alteration to the design on the part of the engravers is unclear. Sabatier 1860, p.139, described the scene as "Femme à genoux devant un gladiateur". Iconographical details, such as the poses of the central figures and the animal-like figures shown in the background of two design-types most strongly suggest that Alföldi's interpretation of the scene as Ulysses and Circe is correct.

ὥς φασ' ἐγὼ δ' ἄορ ὅξυ ἔρυσσάμενος παρὰ μηροῦ
 Κίρκη ἐπήϊξα ὥς τε κτάμεναι μενεαίνων.
 ἡ δὲ μέγα ἰάχουσα ὑπέδραμε καὶ λάβε γούνων,
 καί μ' ὀλοφυρομένη ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα....

The Odyssey X.321 - 324

Circe's head is slightly raised, as if to address the hero, while the flying cape which flows behind her serves not only to balance her arms compositionally, but also suggests that she has suddenly thrown herself into the position depicted, her drapery yet to settle. The figure of Ulysses, in contrast, appears somewhat stiffly posed. He is shown from the front with his legs parted, a sword drawn in his right hand, his left resting on his waist, his head turned to the right; a stance reflecting his confidence and supremacy.

In the upper right hand portion of the flans of two design-types (Plate 19.1 - 2) an architectural structure is represented, giving the scene a spatial setting and introducing further figures. A square wall of bricks or stone blocks topped by a window-like feature are shown, with three figures clearly visible in the opening. These figures, undoubtedly meant to represent Ulysses' transformed companions, have the heads of animals but stand upright and appear to carry shields. The depiction of these figures serves to remind the viewer of the events preceding the supplication scene, and as evidence of Circe's power, they serve

to heighten the significance of Ulysses' action.⁴⁴ Thus the various elements of the design vividly capture the atmosphere of Ulysses' physical and emotional victory over Circe.⁴⁵

A further ungrouped, struck contorniate-type⁴⁶ illustrating an Homeric adventure of Ulysses, his escape from the cave of Polyphemus, is thematically related to the 'Ulysses and Circe' design-types. The type was carried on contorniates bearing the reverse legend **OLEXEVS** (Plate 19.4).⁴⁷ An unusual numismatic composition, the design shows the ram, under which the hero is hiding, standing in the centre of the flan, facing to the right. The huge figure of the ram struck in high relief, with beautifully portrayed curved horn crowning its head, dominates the design. The animal is shown with its right foreleg extended, preparing to take a step. The schematically represented Ulysses, shown naked with his leg wrapped around the ram's hind-quarters and his arm grasping the wool on the animal's shoulder, rests his

⁴⁴ While under Snodgrass' terminology the narrative method of the design might be called, 'synoptic by extention' (Snodgrass 1982, p.9), the limitations of spatial and temporal unity are adhered to by the artist, and thus the design may be called 'monoscenic'. The presence of animal-sailors is an allusion to an earlier stage of the story, but their major function within this design would seem to be to identify the figures of Ulysses and Circe. It is the action and re-action of these figures which is the major point of interest in the design. For further discussion of Snodgrass' terminology, see Chapter One, p.17.

⁴⁵ The action depicted on this contorniate-type, with Ulysses standing to receive Circe's supplication, is also known from the 'Tabula Odyssea' relief. See Sadurska 1964, Planche I.IA. Also see Alföldi 1990, p.155 and Tafel 256.8 - 9.

⁴⁶ The type is grouped outside the relative chronology established by Alföldi. See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm III.B.

⁴⁷ Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 177.4 - 10, 178.1. Alföldi 1990, pp.155 - 156, notes "Die Umschrift lautet nicht OLEXIVS, wie Sabatier und Cohen zu lesen meinten, sondern OLEXEVS, eine Vulgärform für ULIXEVS."

head beneath its chest. The scene illustrated is clearly that described by Homer:

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ γε,
 ἄρνειὸς γὰρ ἔην, μήλων ὃχ' ἄριστος ἀπάντων,
 τοῦ κατὰ νῶτα λαβών, λασίην ὑπὸ γαστέρ' ἔλυσθεῖς
 κείμην· αὐτὰρ χερσὶν ἄώτου θεσπεσίοιο
 νωλεμέως στρεφθεὶς ἐχόμεν τετληότι θυμῷ.

The Odyssey IX. 431 - 435

In addition to the ground-line and legend, other compositional features have been added to fill the area around the figures. The sinuous branches of a tree bearing leaves is shown, in very low relief, rising from behind the ram, while to the extreme right an architectural feature with decorative sculpture is shown, perhaps representing an altar.⁴⁸ While illustrative of a unique and specific legendary event known from external sources, the contorniate's scene is generally lacking in physical action, the schematic manner in which the figure of the hero is represented detracts from the naturalism of the scene, and the potential psychological tension of the hero's narrow escape is not developed.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ See Alföldi 1976, p.200. The top of this structure appears, on examples held in the British Museum, Tray 19, to be shown issuing flames(?). Such a structure would appear to be out of place given the Homeric tradition which stresses that the arts of civilization were unknown to the Cyclops. Its inclusion in the design may reflect an imperfect knowledge of this tradition on the part of the engraver.

⁴⁹ Surviving statue-types of Ulysses hiding under the ram of Polyphemus suggest that the design may have either been inspired by or copied from a
 (Continued. ...)

The legendary Punishment of Dirce, an event recorded by such writers as Apollodorus⁵⁰ and Pausanias,⁵¹ was illustrated by two distinct contorniate-types.⁵² The finest of these is known from four(?) design-types, differing from each other in minor points of composition and proportions (Plate 19.5 - 8).⁵³ They shows Amphion and Zethus standing on either side of a large rearing bull. The design makes excellent use of the limited size and circular shape of the flan. The bull, which is depicted in an organic and naturalistic manner, is full of energy and dominates the design. A compositional balance has been achieved by the positioning of the brothers to either side of the beast. Their hold on the bull adds a sense of physical tension to the design. The figure to the left is shown from behind in a three-quarter view,

sculptural group, or copied from a numismatic prototype itself derived from such groups; see Bieber 1955, Figures 401 - 402.

⁵⁰ Apollodorus, The Library III.v.

⁵¹ Pausanias, Boiotia IX.17.4.

⁵² The first type, here represented by Plate 19.8 - 11, is identified by Alföldi 1976, Diagramm I, as belonging to 'Die Erste Grosse Stempelfolge'. The second type, here represented by Plate 19.12(a) - (b) is known only from pieces combined with an obverse-type of Trajan and is not, therefore included in Alföldi's relative chronology. See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm III.B.

⁵³ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 127.2; see Plate 19.5, Tafel 28.1 - 5; see Plate 19.6. Tafeln 60.1 - 4, 128.3; see Plate 19.7. Tafel 132.9 - 10; see Plate 19.8. Also see LIMC III, Dirke p.639, n.37. Alföldi 1976, p.199, and Alföldi 1990, pp.138f., differentiates between three variations on this basic type, those here represented by Plates 19.6 - 8. The design-type here represented by Plate 19.5 is included by Alföldi as belonging to the design-type here represented by Plate 19.7. Inspection of that here represented by Plate 19.5 at the British Museum (Contorniate Tray 17) has led me to differentiate between this piece, which shows Dirce to be naked, and a design-type (Plate 19.7) which shows her clothed. See below Note 54. The example reproduced by Alföldi 1976, Tafel 128.3 is too worn to make judgement as to which of the design-types it belongs.

his right arm extended to grasp the bull's head and his body leaning, straining against the creature's attempts to rear away. The sense of movement and tension created by the poses of these figures is enhanced by the their flying capes, which are depicted in curving folds to the left and right.

The figure of Dirce herself is depicted on a scale different to that of the brothers, her head appears ill-proportioned in comparison with the rest of her body, and her right leg is far too diminutive compared with her left. Despite these features her fallen figure is of some interest. On some design-types (Plate 19.6 - 7)⁵⁴ she wears a short tunic. Her legs, partially concealed by her dress, are bent backwards in a tortured pose. Her torso rises from the mass of her drapery. Her head is turned to the right, facing the brother whose right leg she holds by her outstretched hand. This gesture, indicating that she is pleading for her life, enhances the psychological impact of the design.

In contrast to the design-types described above, where physical action and the psychological suffering of Dirce engage the viewer's attention, a second type (Plate 19.9(a) - (b)),⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Features of Dirce's drapery are most clearly observed on the design-type here represented by Plate 19.7, as revealed by the example held in the Gnechi Collection, Case 315.31 (housed in the Museo Nazionale Romano). The following details of her drapery are based on observations of this piece. While such features are less distinct on the example illustrated by Alföldi 1976, Tafel 28.1 - 5 (see Plate 19.6), the figure of Dirce would appear to be also draped on this design-type.

⁵⁵ Cabinet des Médailles, Number 17263, and Alföldi 1976, Tafel 157.7 - 8; see Plate 19.9(a), and Sabatier 1860, Plate XIV.9; see Plate 19.9(b). See also LIMC III, *Dirke* p.639, n.38, and Alföldi 1990, pp138f.

depicting the same subject, is much less successful. The general composition and the nature of the figure's poses suggest something of the violent nature of the action depicted. For example the pose of the brother to the right reflects the physical strain required to capture the bull. However the figures themselves are represented in an un-naturalistic manner and the design lacks a common scale. The bull, for example, is shown on a scale disproportionate to that of the two brothers, and its hind legs and tail appear schematically represented. Similarly the figure of Dirce, shown lying on a large rock which perhaps represents Mount Cithaeron, has been engraved on a different scale to that of the figures of her tormentors and appears most diminutive. Minor points of detail also reflect differing artistic qualities; while the cape of the brother to the left appears naturalistic,⁵⁶ flowing out behind him in folds of drapery, the cape of the brother to the right is schematically represented by a simple triangular shape. Thus, while the general composition and complex positioning of the figures suggests the influence of an artist of some skill, the execution of the design is very poor, features which suggest that this type may be the result of copying from a numismatic or other prototype.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ The pose of this figure, and details of his drapery may be compared with that of the wall-painting of the Pentheus Room in the House of the Vettii, Pompeii, suggesting that both depictions may have originated from a common prototype; see Figure XXX.

⁵⁷ In addition to the wall-painting noted above, (Note 56), the subject of Dirce's punishment is also known from statuary and other wall-paintings, and it is possible that such works may have been prototypes for the engravers of these contorniates; see Bieber 1955, Figure 529, and Dawson 1944, pp.93 - 95 and p.113, Plates IX, XI. See *LIMC* III, *Dirke* p.635f. Coins from Lydia, of Akraesos issued under Septimius Severus (see Sallet *ZfN* 14 (1887), pp.9 - 12, and *LIMC* III, *Dirke* n.35; see Figure XXXII.iii), and of Thyateira under Alexander Severus (see *LIMC* III, *Dirke* n.36; see Figure XXXII.iv) bear
(Continued. ...)

A contorniate-type issued in conjunction with obverse portraits of Homer, Augustus and Trajan, appears to depict Andromache pleading with Hector (Plate 19.10(a) - (b)).⁵⁸ The action depicted involves psychological drama as husband and wife make their final farewell. Homer writes:

Ἀνδρομάχῃ δέ οἱ ἄγχι παρίστατο δάκρυ χέουσα,
 ἔν τ' ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρὶ ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε·

The Iliad VI.405 - 406

The figure of Hector appears somewhat stiffly posed. He is shown facing, his head turned sharply to look at Andromache at the left.

compositional similarities with these contorniates. Also see Alföldi 1990, pp.138 - 140

⁵⁸ Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 31.3, 40.3 - 6, 128.4 - 6, 129.2 - 3; see Plate 19.10(a). Identification of the scene carried by these contorniates is by no means certain. Robert 1882, p.10, refers to the figures as Cybele and Atys. In *Revue Numismatique* 1885, Babelon, pp.39 - 40, describes the design as "Cybèle, portant la couronne murale, est debout devant Atys, sur l'épaule duquel elle pose une main...." A line-drawing of the design is included in his work as Plate IV.1; see Plate 19.10(b). MacDonald 1909, pp.41 - 42 states: "The reverse type ... is of doubtful interpretation. It was first published in 1879 by Robert [*Catalogue des Méd. contorniates*, p.6], who describes it as Cybele and Atys ... Gneccchi, who believed the type to be unpublished, suggests that it might be possible to see in it a representation of the parting of Hector and Andromache ['Appunti' *RIN*, 1895, XXXV, pp.297 - 298] - a view that seems considerably less probable than Robert's." Given that the 'mural crown' on which Robert bases his identification, and which was reproduced by him in a later engraving of the type (Plate 19.10(b)) is not observable on examples held in the Hunter and Gneccchi Collections (Museo Nazionale Romano - Case 315.51, 315.79), I provisionally accept the identification of the scene given by Gneccchi 1895, pp.297 - 298, and followed by Kapossy 1971/72, p.147, Plate II.5 and Alföldi 1976, p.200.

She is facing to the right with her left arm extended to rest on Hector's shoulder. A degree of dramatic tension has been achieved by the contorniate-engraver. The figures are united in their mutual gaze, and Andromache's touch is reciprocated as Hector's right arm reaches out to her waist. The psychological tension of Hector's impending departure is reflected in his pose for, leaning slightly to the right, he appears to be breaking their embrace. The design invokes a degree of emotional response from the viewer.

A further point of detail worthy of note is the die-engraver's depiction of various types of drapery.⁵⁹ The thick, heavy folds of Andromache's outer garment are contrasted by the delicate lines of an under-garment which can be observed between her feet. Similarly Hector's cape, which forms a backdrop to his body, contrasts with the tunic in which he is clothed. This tunic is shown to be pulled into layers of drapery around his chest, waist and knees. Such points of detail serve to heighten the visual interest and credence of the figures.

The encounter between Ulysses and Scylla was celebrated on the reverses of a number of contorniates, of which six design-types can be differentiated⁶⁰ (Plates 20.1 - 6(b)).⁶¹ The

⁵⁹ The features noted below are best preserved on a piece held in the Gneccchi Collection, Case 315.51, Museo Nazionale Romano.

⁶⁰ Numerically the 'Ulysses and Scylla' design-types form the largest group of surviving contorniates depicting mythological subject matter. Alföldi 1976, p.201, differentiates four design-types, based on changes in the number and position of Scylla's tails, and other points of detail. Alföldi 1990, pp.156 - 157, adds a fifth 'variant' and gives it as 'Nr.83a' in his numbering system of 1976 which assigned the 'Skylia' types Numbers 83 - 86. Personal observation of a
(Continued. ...

earliest design-type depicts the front section of the vessel of Ulysses to the left (Plate 20.1). Three figures are shown on the deck. That to the extreme left is shown as a helmeted warrior. The next is depicted armed with a spear and round shield and wearing a military uniform and helmet. A third figure is shown in a crouching position as the monster Scylla drags him towards the bow of the ship by his hair. A number of schematically represented human figures are depicted in the lower portion of the field already struggling in the water. The large upper portion of the body of Scylla herself is shown in the middle of the flan,

piece held in the British Museum, Number R4847 (noted by Alföldi 1976, p.54 as 'B.M. 80'), has led me to differentiate between this piece, and others included by Alföldi 1976, p.201, Number 83 Tafel 64.12, as belonging to the same design-type (see below Notes 67 and 68).

61 British Museum, Number R4847 (corresponding to Alföldi 1976, Tafel 64.12 and Sachero 1987, Fig.26); see Plate 20.1. Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 63.9 - 12, 64.1 - 11, and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 216.5; see Plate 20.2. Alföldi 1990, Tafel 223.7; see Plate 20.3. Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 9.3 - 6, 12.6 - 8, 146.2 - 8, 154.3 - 7, and Alföldi 1990, Tafeln 213.6, 257.2; see Plate 20.4(a), and Sabatier 1860, Plate XIII.12; see Plate 20.4(b). Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 12.5, 13.4 - 8, 146.9 - 12, 147.1 - 12, 148.1 - 12, 149.1 - 11, 153.4 - 12, 154.1 - 2, and Alföldi 1990, Tafeln 220.12, 221.1, 221.5 and 257.1; see Plate 20.5. Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 25.5 - 6, 159.6, 160. 9 - 10, 161.1 - 2, 162.6 - 10, 163.1; see Plate 20.6(a). Sabatier 1860, Plate XIII.13; see Plate 20.6(b). Alföldi dates the design-types here represented by Plate 20.1 - 2 as belonging to 'Die Erst Grosse Stempelfolge', and those represented by Plate 20.4(a) - 6(b) as belonging to 'Die Zweite Grosse Stempelfolge' (see Alföldi 1976, Diagramm I and II). The later design-types appear to be copied from the earlier design-types. The obverse-type combined with the reverse here represented by Plate 20.3 bearing the legend EVTIMI-VIN-CAS is given the identification 'Kutscher VII' by Alföldi 1976, p.160. While the obverse/reverse combination of piece in question is unique and therefore outside Alföldi's relative chronology, it is possible that it, like the other 'Kutscher VII' types, was struck in the later part of 'Die Zweite Grosse Stempelfolge'. If so its reverse-design may have been borrowed or adapted by the die-engravers responsible for the design-types here represented by Plate 20.4 - 6(b). Vermeule 1979, p.278, notes that the design-type here reproduced as Plate 20.1, "... has been dated, from its combinations with other obverse and reverse dies, in the reigns of the Emperors Valentinianus I and Valens, A.D. 364 to 378." Alföldi 1976, Diagramm II, dates the design-type to the period after A.D. 410. Vermeule has, perhaps, confused this design-type of the later period with the original design-type issued in the earlier period of contorniate striking.

dominating the composition. Her waist, which rises from sinuous lines representing water, is girdled with the front portions of hounds. Her torso rises to the height of the ship's bow, and her right arm is extended to seize a sailor while her left carries a shield. Her lower parts are represented as fish-tails, rising out of the water at various points and filling the upper regions of the field. To the bottom right of the flan the torso and head of a somewhat schematically represented human figure can be distinguished. It is surrounded by an arched feature (a cave?), and would appear to represent Charybdis in her cavern.⁶²

While the schematic manner in which the fallen sailors are represented does detract somewhat from the overall visual credence of the design, points of detail such as Scylla's sinuous tails rising from the lower field in great curves to fill the upper portions of the flan, and the great mass of her body balancing that of the ship, are visually interesting.

The poses of the various standing sailors also attract attention. That to the left is depicted wringing his hands as if in despair at the scene before him. To his right a warrior (Ulysses?)⁶³ holds aloft a spear, as if to hurl it at the monster, while the hapless

⁶² This significant point of detail, which was apparently misinterpreted by contorniate-engravers copying this type, has not been noted by modern writers. As noted above (Note 61), Alföldi 1976, p.201, groups this design-type with the other belonging to 'Die Erst Grosse Stempelfolge'. On this second design-type the figure of Charybdis in her cave is replaced by one of Scylla's tails (which has become an independent creature) eating a sailor.

⁶³ MacDonald 1909, p.23, describes, in part, the design-type here represented by Plate 20.5 as showing "...Ulysses, wearing pileus and carrying shield, striking at Scylla with [a] spear...."

figure being captured by Scylla arches and falls backwards as if in an attempt to be free of her grasp on his hair.⁶⁴ While the degree of naturalism employed by the engravers of the various design-types does vary, the figures' poses, which are common to all design-types, create a strong sense of physical action and reaction, and invite the viewer to make an emotional response to the plight of Scylla's victim.

The 'Ulysses and Scylla' design-types reveal several interesting iconographical features. Firstly, while all design-types of this group appear to have been intended to represent the encounter between Ulysses and Scylla, as described in The Odyssey XII.252f., the monster, as noted by McDowall, is depicted not according to Homeric tradition, but that of Vergil.⁶⁵ The Homeric six-headed, twelve-footed eater of dolphins and sea-dogs has been replaced by a composite figure shown on contorniates as:

prima hominis facies et pulchro pectore virgo

⁶⁴ MacDonald 1909, p.24, observes that on the design-type here represented by Plate 20.5 "... the shield of the man who is being dragged away has slipped from his grasp and rolled behind his companion." This point of detail enhances the momentary quality of the scene.

⁶⁵ McDowall 1906, p.255. The statement by Vermeule 1979, p.277, that "The scene on the contorniate is actually a close visual recreation of the appropriate lines in book XII of The Odyssey," is correct in regard to the fact that the scene depicted is Ulysses' not Aeneas' encounter with Scylla. However he does not note the discrepancy between the contorniate's representation of Scylla and the description given by Homer. Also Davison 1972, p.29, notes that "In the Odyssey, the terrible teeth snatched the men off the ship's deck, but here the monster is using her hands to capture them." Further points of comparison between the design and Homeric tradition are made by MacDonald 1909, p.26.

pube tenuis, postrema immani corpore pistrix,
delphinum caudas utero commissa luporum.

Vergil, Aeneid Book III.426 - 428

Such changes in the composition of the monster's body, indicating an interesting merging of legendary traditions, are also known from other examples of Hellenistic and Roman art.⁶⁶

The second noteworthy iconographical feature of the 'Ulysses and Scylla' design-types is the manner in which elements of the monster's body, 'misunderstood' by some die-engravers, have, in some cases, become individual creatures in their own right.⁶⁷ As noted, the body of Scylla shown on the earliest design-type (Plate 20.1) represents her lower body as fish-tails rising to fill the upper regions of the field. The base of the tail above Scylla's head appears to join onto that to the extreme right, which itself is

⁶⁶ McDowall 1906, p.255, notes similarities between the contorniate's depiction of Scylla and that represented on an Etruscan urn; see Baumeister 1887/89, Figure 1762, and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 257.5; see Figure XXXI.i. Vermeule 1979, p.277, and Alföldi 1990, pp.156 - 157 and Tafel 257 discuss the possibility of prototypes in some depth. For example see Andreae 1974, pp.85f. and Figure 1; see Figure XXXI.ii. Also see Andreae & Conticello 1987, pp.17 - 18, Tafeln 22 - 23. The composition of Scylla as shown on the contorniate design-types is in full accord with that known from a Republican coin-type. See BMCRR I, p.563, Number 18 and Plate CXX.13 - 15.

⁶⁷ In his description of design-types Alföldi 1976, p.201, Number 84, notes, "Die Veränderungen gegenüber 83 [here reproduced as Plate 20.4(a)] beruhen auf Missverständnissen. Der Fisch-Schwanz r. wurde zum selbständigen grossen Fisch, der dabei ist, einen der Männer zu verschlingen, nach dem zugleich auch einer der Hunde schnappt." While it is true that design-types of 'Die Zweite Grosse Stempelfolge' do reflect this feature, personal observation of examples held by the British Museum (Numbers R4849 and R4850), which Alföldi 1976, p.201 classifies as being the same design-type as that here represented by Plate 20.1, indicate that this misinterpretation of the tails of Scylla originally occurred during 'Die Erste Grosse Stempelfolge'.

cut off by the sweep of the field. Just beneath this point Charybdis sits in her cavern. It would seem that these details were not accurately noted by a contorniate-engraver who, in the same period, appears to have copied this design. On his design-type (Plate 20.2) the figure of Charybdis has been reduced to a most schematic representation, and the cave has become a small semi-circle just above her head. Furthermore the base of the tail is shown with a mouth-like feature just above the semi-circle: a misinterpretation which was to be further embellished by later engravers. On a design-type of the 'Second Great Striking' (Plate 20.4(a) - (b)) Scylla's tails have separated, and a new one has been added on the extreme left. The tail to the right now appears to have a dolphin-like head, and the figure beneath it is shown as an upside-down sailor being attacked by this new monster. On other design-types of this period (Plate 20.3 and 5) the 'head' of the tail in question appears more simple, and the hapless sailor is shown with his head and torso above the water.^{67a} The final design-type (Plate 20.6(a) - (b)) shows this 'sea-creature' to have a monstrous head and set of jaws, with which it is about to swallow an upside-down sailor. These apparent mistakes in the depiction of Scylla's body should also be seen in the light of many minor compositional changes. For example on one design-type of the 'Ulysses and Scylla' group (Plate 20.1) Scylla is shown holding a shield, on another the

^{67a} As noted above (Note 61) the design-type here represented by Plate 20.3 may belong to 'Die Zweite Grosse Stempelfolge' and precede those here represented by Plate 20.4(a) - 6(b). This design-type appears most similar to that here represented by Plate 20.5, with the shape of the coils and head of the 'sea-creature' on the right being the major point of difference between them.

rudder of a ship (Plate 20.4(a) - (b)), while on others a simple staff (Plate 20.3 and 5 - 6(b)). Similarly the positioning of the fishtails/sea-creatures, the poses of the fallen sailors, the positioning of the three aboard the ship, and details of the craft itself differ somewhat between design-types. On three design-types (Plate 20.3 and 5 - 6(b)) a tree has been added to the scene.⁶⁸

The various compositional alterations noted between the design-types suggest that, in their copying of a prototype,⁶⁹ the die-engravers of some design-types have failed to recognize the significance of the fish-tails and misinterpreted them as independent animals. If so it would appear a most careless example of copying. Furthermore this suggests that the contorniate die-engravers, working within the Christian Empire, may not have possessed a full knowledge of the mythological heritage of pagan Rome.⁷⁰ From the narrative point of view their

⁶⁸ In his discussion of the design-type here represented by Plate 20.4(a) - (b), Alföldi 1976, p.201, Number 84, and Alföldi 1990, pp.156 - 157 argues that the second fishtail has become attached to a tree. A tree is also noted by Vermeule 1979, p.277 in his discussion of this design-type. McDowall 1906, p.24, in reference to this design-type, argues that "Charybdis is ... indicated not only by the fig-tree in the background, but by the troubled waves surging up and down...." Personal observation of a very well preserved example of this design-type at the Cabinet des Médailles (Number 17140) did not reveal a tree, but three tails in the upper field. A schematically represented tree is, however, shown in the upper-middle section of the field on three design-types (Plate 20.3 and 5 - 6(b)).

⁶⁹ It would seem that the engraver of the original design-type (see Plate 20.1) may have based his design on a non-numismatic prototype (see Note 66), and that his design formed the prototype for further contorniate design-types (see Plate 20.2 - 6(b)). That later engravers copied from the original contorniate design-type, and not from non-numismatic prototypes (Alföldi 1990, p.157) is suggested by the noted process of 'elaboration' involving the depiction of the fish-tail/sea-creature.

⁷⁰ See above Note 22.

errors, unlike those of the engravers of the debased 'Achilles and Penthesilea' design-types (Plate 18.2 - 4), are not so major as to render their scenes meaningless. Their design-types are still recognizable as illustrative of the specific legendary event of Scylla's attack on the vessel of Ulysses and may be considered to constitute examples of narrative art. Judgement on the narrative qualities of their embellishments to the basic design is open to debate. While the 'sea-creature's' attack on a fallen sailor somewhat distracts the viewer's attention from the central action of the design (Scylla's grip on a struggling sailor and Ulysses'(? reaction), the new creature's assault adds a further element of interest to the scene. It might even be argued that compared to the basic design's depiction of Charybdis in her cavern, this new element, by adding to the physical violence of the scene, actually enhances its visual impact.

The alteration or corruption of a basic mythological composition by the introduction of compositional changes noted above would also appear to have occurred in regard to various 'Flaying of Marsyas' design-types (Plate 20.7 - 9).⁷¹ The design-types which represent this mythological event recorded by such writers as Ovid⁷² and Apollodorus⁷³ share a common

⁷¹ Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 50.6 - 7, 129.4 - 12, 103.1, 133.11 - 12, 134.1 - 5 and 7 - 12, 212.8; see Plate 20.7, Tafeln 74.3 - 12, 75.1 - 12, 76.1 - 6, and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 216.11 - 12; see Plate 20.8. Mazzini 1958, Tav. LXXXIX.112; see Plate 20.9. The design-type here represented by Plate 20.7 is identified by Alföldi 1976, Diagramm I, as belonging to 'Die Erste Grosse Stempelfolge', and that represented by Plate 20.8 as belonging to 'Die Zweite Grosse Stempelfolge', (Alföldi 1976, Diagramm II).

⁷² Ovid, Metamorphoses Book VI.382 - 399.

⁷³ Apollodorus, The Library I.iv.2.

composition. They show a draped figure to the left with a bound male figure in the centre and a crouching figure behind him. Various interpretations of the scene have been made by modern writers. Some link it with the myth of Apollo and Marsyas, identifying the bound figure as Marsyas, the draped figure as a female or a Muse.⁷⁴ McDowall argues that the draped figure is not a woman "but Apollo Citharoedus, seated on a rock with flowing hair and rich drapery ...",⁷⁵ and, in view of its characteristic crouching pose, the figure on the extreme right would appear to represent the Scythian slave.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Sabatier 1860, p.145, describes a design-type as "Supplice de Marsyas?". McDowall 1906, p.263, gives a brief description of earlier interpretations. Mazzini 1958, p.301, describes the scene as Marsyas and two Muses. Sachero 1987, p.86 describes the type here represented by Plate 20.7 as "Donna addolorata guarda uomo nudo con le mani legate, appeso ad un albero. Ai piede, é un uomo accovacciato." Sachero further notes, "Secondo Sabatier e Cohen rappresenta il supplizio di Marsia fatto scorticare da Apollo vincitore in un torneo. Allora verrebbe nella donna la Dea della musica. Alföldi invece interpreta la scena come barbari condotti in cattività." Also see below Notes 76 and 77.

⁷⁵ McDowall 1906, p.263. MacDonald 1909, pp.38 - 39 follows this identification of the scene. Also see below Note 76.

⁷⁶ Tocci 1965, p.224 Tav.LXIV.30; see Plate 20.10, identifies the scene on a second type as follows: "Famiglia di barbari prigionieri. Da sinistra: donna seduta quasi a destra su di un letto, il volto a destra, vestita della stola, appoggia il braccio sinistro piegato sul cuscino e il volto sulla mano, e tiene la destra abbassata e puntata sul letto medesimo. Davanti a lei un uomo stante a sinistra seminudo, con le braccia legate dietro il dorso, e appoggiato ad un arbusto (?). Dietro di questi, ai suoi piedi, un fanciullo in ginocchio a destra guarda indietro e in alto verso di lui." Alföldi 1976, p.204, calls the two design-types he differentiates, "Gefangene Barbaren... Nach Apollo, Marsyas und dem Skythen komponiert." Alföldi 1990, p.172, reaffirms his view that the various examples all depict a mourning female, captured barbarian and slave boy, compositionally derived from a 'Faying of Marsyas' prototype. His identification of all the pieces as representing such a scene may be based on a misunderstanding arising from an apparent adaptation of the type (Plate 20.10). On this example, unlike the 'Faying of Marsyas' design-types noted above (Plate 20.7 - 9), the central figure is not naked, but wears a cloth around his waist. His clean-shaven face contrasts with the bearded features of the figure shown on the 'Faying of Marsyas' design-types, and his hair is depicted as a single, long lock in barbaric fashion. These deliberate iconographical changes suggest that the contorniate-engraver of this type may have adapted the original design in order to show a captured barbarian and

(Continued. ...)

On all design-types the draped figure of Apollo Citharoedus is shown to the left, seated on a rock with his right leg extended. The die-engravers' detailed representation of the folds and textures of the drapery is visually attractive. The figure is facing to the right, with its left hand supporting the chin. The left elbow rests on the raised left leg, while the right arm is bent behind its back. The pose is both naturalistic and visually stimulating, leading the viewer to a consideration the figure's emotional state as he sits, "... thoughtfully watching the preparations for the torture of his rival, for whom the crouching Scythian slave sharpens his knife."⁷⁷ The figure of Marsyas stands in the centre of the flan, with that of the slave shown to the extreme right. The Scythian slave appears to be resting on his buttocks, his back to Marsyas, with knees pulled tightly to his chest and his arms extended in front of him, no doubt sharpening his blade. His head is turned sharply around to gaze at Marsyas' hands, focusing the viewer's attention on his bonds and emphasizing his hopeless situation. On two design-types (Plate 20.8 - 9) branches appear behind Marsyas' bound hands, perhaps representing the pine on which he is to be hanged.⁷⁸

mourning figures - a symbol of Roman military triumph. For the purpose of this thesis I provisionally accept the identification of seated figure shown on the type here represented by Plate 20.7 - 9 as Apollo Citharoedus, (as suggested by McDowall 1906, p.263).

⁷⁷ McDowall 1906, p.263.

⁷⁸ Alföldi 1976, p.204, describes the tree as a feature of both of the design-types he describes as 'Gefangene Barbaren'. See also Alföldi 1990, p.172. Personal observation of various examples of the design-type here reproduced as Plate 20.7 (Cabinet des Médailles, Number 17262, Gneccchi Collection (Museo Nazionale Romano) Case 315.50, and British Museum, Tray 16)
(Continued. ...)

From the narrative point of view the 'Flaying of Marsyas' design-types form an interesting group of illustrations in the monoscenic mode. Features such as the contrasting poses of the figures and the fine details of Apollo Citharoedus' drapery attract attention, and the psychological tension is created within the design by the attitudes and gazes of the figure; the god appears in deep contemplation as he looks towards his adversary, the Scythian slave turns from his preparations to examine the satyr's bonds. This psychological tension leads the viewer to reflect on the horrific action to follow.⁷⁹

While such artistic features suggest the influence of a master-engraver, some of the design-types reflect a strange mixture of naturalistic and 'illogical' poses, of the visually credible and incredible. On the finest design-type Marsyas' legs are shown in profile, with his shoulders turned slightly so as to be shown in three-quarter view (Plate 20.7). His arms are clearly pulled backwards to be tied behind his back. However the engravers of two design-types have failed to portray this pose in a realistic manner (Plate 20.8 - 9). On these pieces his arms are angled from the shoulder in an unnaturalistic way so that, illogically, his torso would appear to face to the right. This error in rendering anatomical details detracts from the visual credibility of such

suggests that the absence of such a feature on these examples warrant its differentiation from the other noted design-types.

⁷⁹ Surviving statue-types of the Flaying of Marsyas show the figure of the satyr in what might be considered to be the 'next phase' of the action, actually tied to the pine; see Bieber 1955, Figures 438 - 440. For discussion of possible prototypes see Alföldi 1990, p.172.

design-types and suggests that, in the process of copying, the engravers have failed either to comprehend the nature of the pose or to portray it in a naturalistic manner.

**B) MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVE ART ON
CONTORNATE-TYPES OF THE 'SECOND
GREAT STRIKING'**

One of the earliest contorniate-types of the 'Second Great Striking' depicts a hero combatting a bull,⁸⁰ a subject matter celebrated by several types during this period. With the exception of design-types depicting Jason and the Brazen Bulls⁸¹ lack of heroic accoutrements which would serve to identify the individual involved renders it impossible to determine whether they were intended to illustrate a specific legendary event, such as Hercules and the Cretan bull or Theseus and the Bull of Marathon, or were intended as non-specific scenes of heroic combat.⁸²

⁸⁰ See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm II.

⁸¹ See below, Note 90.

⁸² Whereas Sabatier 1860, pp.141 - 142, describes the type here reproduced as Plate 21.4 as Hercules combatting the Cretan bull and those here reproduced as Plate 21.1 and 21.4 as Theseus and the Bull of Marathon, Alföldi 1976, p.199, and Alföldi 1990, p.141, calls the types "Heros im Stierkampf". Sachero 1987, p.92, describes the type here represented by Plate 21.5, "Ercole nudo doma il Toro di Creta che si erge sulle Zampe posteriori, tenendolo con la destra per un corno." If the types were intended to represent non-specific scenes of heroic combat, and thus lacking an external reference, they could be judged as non-narrative, generic types. Given that several other contorniate-types do illustrate legendary combat, such as Hercules and Nessus (Plates 22.1(a) - (b) and 17.6), and Jason and the Brazen Bulls (Plate 21.7 - 8), it would seem probable
(Continued. ...)

The 'hero and bull' contorniate-types are comparable not only in their general subject matter, but also in their artistic features. For example all are compositionally well suited to the circular shape of the flan. While the types are very different in regards to the various poses of their figures, their organic naturalism and convincing representations of physical action mark them as outstanding examples of the die-engraver's art.

On one type a bull, shown to the right, is being pulled back onto its haunches by a heroic figure (Plate 21.1).⁸³ While surviving examples are worn and hence details of the figures are difficult to distinguish,⁸⁴ they appear to be robust, and well proportioned and muscled. The hero stands in the centre of the flan, facing to the left.⁸⁵ His body is arched to the right as he grasps the bull around the throat and pulls its head backwards. The creature has fallen onto

that the types here in question were intended to represent either Hercules or Theseus in combat. Given that the figure is depicted actually wrestling the beast, it is more likely that the hero involved is meant to represent Hercules. *LIMC* V, p.65, n. 2408 and n. 2409, identifies those pieces here represented by Plate 21.4 and .1 (respectively) as 'Herakles'.

⁸³ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 119.3 - 7, Alföldi 1990, p.141, Sachero 1987, p.80, Fig. 42, and *LIMC* V, *Herakles* p.65, n.2409.

⁸⁴ Examples of this type to which I gained access (British Museum, Tray 17, and Cabinet des Médailles, Number 17276) exhibit considerable wear.

⁸⁵ The pose of the figure depicted on this type closely resembles that on another contorniate-type. Alföldi 1976, Tafel 119.7; see Plate 21.2. Curiously the hero depicted on this type holds a large human head from which drops the coils of a serpentine body. While the hero wears a cape and lacks Hercules' accoutrements, could the type be meant to represent Hercules fighting Acheloos, or Periclymenus in the form of a snake?

its hind legs, its twisted tail and rearing forelegs suggesting that it is straining to break free.

In addition to these stimulating poses, which capture the physical effort of the combat, the die-engraver has employed overlapping planes of relief in order to suggest spatial depth. The hero, standing in the foreground, partially obscures the body of the bull. The animal's grasped head is turned onto the plane occupied by the hero. This simple device of employing two planes of overlapping relief, combined with the muscling of the figures, effectively creates an illusion of depth within the flan.

A similar effect is achieved using the same device by the die-maker of a second 'hero and bull' type which depicts the bull facing to the right of the field with a hero, standing behind, grasping its head (Plate 21.3).⁸⁶ The hero's body is almost totally obscured from view by that of the beast. Only his legs, upper torso, head and arm are shown. His arms, which grasp the bull's head, are shown on the same plane of relief as the animal. This employment of overlapping planes of relief creates an illusion of spatial depth within the design.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 172.1 - 2, Alföldi 1990, Tafel 222.3, and Cabinet des Médailles, Number 17325. Alföldi's relative chronology fixes the production of this type some five obverse-types after that represented here by Plate 21.1. See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm II. LIMC V, Herakles p.65, n.2413 notes the subject of the type as 'Uncertain'.

⁸⁷ Given that the die itself must have been engraved in very low relief (for example see the flan struck from it now held in the Cabinet des Médailles, Number 17325), the technical and artistic skill of this contorniate-engraver is all the more remarkable.

The figure of the bull depicted on this type, like that discussed above, is robust and well muscled. The animal's extended foreleg, its raised hind legs and flying tail, all suggest its struggle to pull away from the hero's hold. His pose, as he appear to lean over the beast to wrench its head, and his small flying cape, serve to enhance further the design's captivating sense of movement and physical action.

A further 'hero and bull' type showing the hero standing to the right on a base-line is known from three design-types (Plate 21.4 - 6).⁸⁸ The poses in which both figures are represented are complex, naturalistic and visually stimulating.⁸⁹ Shown from a side view with his left leg extended behind, the hero's right leg is bent, his knee held against the side of his foe. With his extended right arm, which is

⁸⁸ Alföldi 1976, p.199, does not differentiate between these design-types. Alföldi 1976, Tafel 156.5 and .8 appear to be examples of the same design-type. See also LIMC V, *Herakles* p.65, n.2408; see Plate 21.4. Alföldi 1976, Tafel 156.6 - 7 are examples of another design-type, differentiated from the first by the proportions of the figures (Tafel 156.7 appears to have re-tooled in the area around the beast's throat); see Plate 21.5. A further design-type, Alföldi 1976, Tafel 177.3; see Plate 21.6, shows the hero wearing a cape. As these design-types are known only in combination with obverse-types of Trajan (Plate 21.4 - 5) and 'Pius-Caracalla' (Plate 21.6) which do not form part of the sequential series of strikings noted by Alföldi, they are not included in his relative chronology (see Alföldi 1976, Diagramm III.B). Also see Alföldi 1990, pp.141 - 142.

⁸⁹ Details of the figures' poses here described are based on personal observations of the design-types here represented by Plates 21.4, (held in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Cabinet 14.67, Number 330.1901, and the Cabinet des Médailles, Number 17264), and by Plate 21.6 (British Museum, Tray 19, 26.18, being the example noted by Alföldi 1976, p.199, to be 'London 167'). Judging by reproductions (Alföldi 1976, Tafel 156.6 - 7), the figures on the design-type here represented by Plate 21.5 would appear, in general, to be less naturalistic and proportioned than those of the other two design-types.

partly obscured from view by his head, the hero holds one of the bull's horns. His left arm is arched under the beast's head to grasp its chin, pulling the bull's neck into a curved position. On one design-type (Plate 21.6) the inclusion of a cape, shown flying behind the hero, enhances the sense of movement created by the design. The beast, depicted from a three-quarter view to the left of the flank, sits back on its haunches, its forelegs held out before it as if to achieve balance. Strong muscling of the hero's body, particularly his left leg, buttocks and torso, serve to emphasize the physical effort involved in his struggle and enhance the visual credence of the design. Like the other types depicting this subject matter (Plate 21.1 and 3), an illusion of spatial depth is here achieved by the use of over-lapping planes of relief. In the case of these design-types, points of detail, such as the depiction of the bull's tail wrapping around the hero's foot, add to this sense of depth.

Unlike the types discussed above, which lack identifying heroic accoutrements, on a further 'hero and bulls' type a plough in the lower field identifies the scene as a depiction of Jason and the Brazen Bulls.⁹⁰ Two design-types (Plate 21.7 - 8)⁹¹ illustrate this

⁹⁰ Various interpretations of the scene have been made in the past. Sabatier 1860, p.141, describes the design as, "Hercules ramenant les boeufs qui lui avaient été volés par Cacus." Cohen 1880, *Contorniates* p.293, describes it as, "Milo de Crotone saisissant de chaque main un taureau par les cornes;". McDowall 1906, p.254, argues that the scene represents Jason and the Brazen Bulls. This identification is accepted by MacDonald 1909, p.37 as "...certainly correct." It is followed by Alföldi 1976, p.199, Sachero 1987, p.66, and Alföldi 1990, p.140, and appears to be accepted by Toynbee 1945, p.120.

⁹¹ Alföldi 1976, p.199, does not differentiate between these design-types. Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 53.12, 54.1-9, and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 215.10-11; see Plate 21.7, (Continued. ...

specific heroic event which is known from external sources.⁹² They show the hero standing in the centre of the flan on a ground-line which forms an exergue in the lower field. While Jason's head appears slightly large in proportion to the rest of his body, his figure is generally well proportioned and muscled. In either extended hand he holds the horn of a beast. One of the bulls stands to the left, with its head slightly pulled to the right by Jason's grasp. That to the right is shown attempting to rear away to the right, but is checked by the hero's hold. Jason turns his head to face this struggling animal. These various details of pose help to create a sense of physical tension within the design, and add visual interest.

The die-engravers of these design-types create an illusion of spatial depth by the use of overlapping planes of relief. For example Jason's body, standing in the foreground, obscures from view parts of the bulls which rear from behind him. Furthermore compositional balance has been achieved by the simple technique of placing a bull to either side of the hero, while at the same time the

may be differentiated from a second design-type, Alföldi 1976, Tafel 53.11; see **Plate 21.8**. On this latter design-type the left arm of the hero and details of the bull to the right differ from those of the former. Sabatier 1860, Plate XIII.3 shows in his line-drawing the lower portion of the field to be empty and the upper portion of the hero's cape to be cut off by the sweep of the field. Sabatier 1860, p.82, describes the piece he reproduces as being held at the Cabinet Impérial de France. The only such piece now held in the Cabinet des Médailles (Number 17215, and reproduced by Alföldi 1976, Tafel 54.3), while very worn, does show a plough in the lower field and the upper edge of the cape. Sabatier's drawing may, therefore, be dismissed as an inaccurate reproduction rather than illustrating a third design-type.

⁹² For example see Pindar, Pythian Odes IV.244f., and Apollodorus, The Library I.ix.23.

different and energetic poses in which the animals are depicted ensure that a rigid, heraldic composition is avoided. The pose of the hero, facing in the centre of the field, combined with the framing of his head by the flying folds of his chlamys, focuses the viewer's attention.

Points of detail suggest that the finer of the two design-types (Plate 21.7) may have served as a prototype for the engraver of the second (Plate 21.8).⁹³ It would seem that the engraver of the second design-type, a craftsman of lesser artistic talent, made an error in the copying process. On this example the bull to the right appears to have been placed too near the edge of the flan, and in order for the hero to grasp its horn, his left arm has been awkwardly straightened so as to make contact.⁹⁴ Furthermore, in contrast to the right-hand bull on the first design-type which is most naturalistic,⁹⁵ the beast on the second type appears schematic.⁹⁶

⁹³ The details of the two design-types here discussed are based on personal observations of examples of the design-types held in the British Museum (Tray 13, here reproduced as Plate 21.7, and Number R4844, here reproduced as Plate 21.8).

⁹⁴ It would also appear that the engraver of the second design-type overlooked the detail of depicting an edge to the right-hand side (facing) of Jason's cape.

⁹⁵ The beast on this design-type is strongly muscled around the neck, with cast shadows emphasising the modelling of its front limbs. The bull's hooves have been shown in great detail by the die-engraver of this design-type, further evidence for the identification of the beasts as the Brazen Bulls.

⁹⁶ No modelling is indicated, and the beast's head, shown from a frontal view, sits awkwardly atop its elongated and simplified neck.

These features detract from the visual credence of the second design-type and to an extent lessen its artistic qualities.

In terms of its use of the restricted scale and the circular shape of the flan, the first design-type (Plate 21.7) ranks as one of the most successful in the history of Roman mythological numismatic production. Almost the whole contorniate-reverse is covered by the figures, yet an illusion of space is achieved by the rearing of the bull to the right and the flying drapery. Even the exergue, usually left vacant, contains the depiction of the instrument to which Jason will yoke the creatures. This object serves as a symbolic allusion to the subsequent phase of the story.⁹⁷ The vitality and vigour of the scene "... makes this one of the most balanced and original designs to be found on contorniates."⁹⁸

The various 'hero and bull' types and the 'Jason and the Brazen Bulls' type exhibit significant artistic features. In each case use of

⁹⁷ It might be argued that, because the depiction of the plough invites the viewer to imagine the successful outcome of Jason's action, the design could be classified as an example of the 'synoptic' mode of narrative, as defined by Snodgrass 1982, p.9. It may even be argued that, because the implement is shown in a zone of the field separated from the figures by a ground-line, it may be 'proto-cyclic' (see Chapter Three.B, and Appendix Two, The 'Aeneid' Medallion - A Narrative Interpretation). However, to classify the design as either 'synoptic' or 'proto-cyclic' is to over-judge the significance of this feature. The plough appears to have been added as an 'afterthought' by the engraver. It is not a major compositional element; the attention of the viewer is clearly centred on the physical action of Jason. It appears as a minor feature which serves to fill the lower field, a zone separated from the rest of the design by the engraver's use of a conventional ground-line, and helps to identify the scene as 'Jason and the Brazen Bulls'.

⁹⁸ McDowall 1906, p.254. Alföldi 1990, p.140 and Tafel 256.2 suggests a possible prototype. See also LIMC V, Jason pp.631 - 632.

the restricted circular field is masterful. The die-engravers' interest in the physical drama of the struggle, evident in the poses of the figures and their organic naturalism, combined with the sense of spatial depth achieved, engages the viewer's attention, making these amongst the most artistically successful of all Roman numismatic mythological types.

The subject of Hercules' combat with Nessus, known from contorniate-types of the period of the 'First Great Striking',⁹⁹ also appears on pieces struck during the second period (Plate 21.9 - 10).¹⁰⁰ The hero, shown striding towards the left, prepares to dispatch Nessus with his club, which is held in his raised right hand. With his left hand Hercules wrenches the beast's right foreleg towards him. The centaur has not, however, completely given up the struggle. While his left arm is raised above his head to protect it from the hero's blow, the creature still defiantly holds an uplifted club in his right hand.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ See pp.225 - 226 and Plate 17.5 - 6.

¹⁰⁰ British Museum, Tray 13 (noted by Alföldi 1976, p.44 and Tafel 52.2 as B.M. 74); see Plate 21.9. Alföldi 1976, Tafel 52.1; see Plate 21.10. On his line-drawing of the latter piece, Sabatier 1860, Plate XIII.7 indicates the centaur to be weaponless, while on the piece held at the British Museum it clearly holds a club. Sabatier's line-drawing is of an example held in Vienna, and reproduced here as Plate 21.10. As the lower portion of the left-hand side of the flan is missing, and the surface is worn, it is impossible to tell from reproductions if, as Sabatier indicated, the club is missing. If so, it could be classified as a separate design-type. Also see Alföldi 1976, Tafel 52.3, and Alföldi 1990 pp.142 - 143 and Tafel 215.9.

¹⁰¹ The depiction of a club, a weapon not usually associated with centaurs, may be seen as another indication of the contorniate-engravers' incomplete knowledge of pagan mythological tradition.

The figures' attitudes visually suggest the physical efforts of the protagonists. The complexity of their poses and the employment of overlapping planes of relief, the robust and well muscled torsos and arms of both Nessus and Hercules, and the use of landscape elements such as a small bush to the left and tree to the right, are compositional elements which argue that the creator of the design was an artist of some skill. One factor, however, suggests that the contorniate-engraver who cut the die from which this example was struck was not the originator of the design. The legs and rump of the centaur, and the lower part of Hercules' body are disproportionately small when compared to their upper parts, suggesting that the die-engraver may have copied the design, starting from the upper section, and, mis-judging the size of the frame, been forced to compromise the lower section in order to fit it within the die.¹⁰² These features detract somewhat from the naturalism and visual credence of the design.

While the depiction of a club in the hand of the hero shown in the 'Hercules and Nessus' type discussed above identifies the specific legendary event illustrated by the scene, another 'hero and centaur' type, also created during the period of the 'Second Great Striking',

¹⁰² A similar mistake would appear to have been made by the engraver of a 'Jason and the Brazen Bulls' design-type, see above Notes 91f. and **Plate 21.8**.

shows a naked, bearded hero holding a shield (**Plate 21.11**).¹⁰³ These points of iconography do not correspond with any specific legendary event known from surviving external sources. The design may have been intended to illustrate a specific event (with iconographical errors being made by the engraver?), or simply to show a typical, non-narrative scene of heroic combat.

Details of the hero's body, which is shown to the left, are difficult to distinguish on existing examples. He is shown with his right leg advancing, bearing the weight as he leans forward to grasp the centaur's arms. The centaur itself, slightly rearing from the right, is depicted from an interesting perspective. While its head and arms are shown from a side view, the equine section of its body is shown from a three-quarter view. Thus the creature's rump and hind legs are clearly in view. The die-engraver's use of a combination of perspectives may have been used to suggest that the creature's upper body was being wrenched sideways in the struggle. However, generally the design fails to capture the physical drama of the event. While the pose of the centaur, with its slightly arched back and bending limbs, suggests something of the physical strain of the battle, the stiffly posed figure of the hero greatly detracts from the design's visual impact.

¹⁰³ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 144.10 - 12. Alföldi (p.116), classifies the type as "Heros und Kentaur", and according to his relative chronology it was produced towards the end of the period of the 'Second Great Striking'. See also Alföldi 1990, p.142.

A further contorniate depicting Hercules' battle with the centaur Nessus (**Plate 22.1(a) - (b)**)¹⁰⁴ is compositionally similar to an Antonine medallion-type (**Plate 7.10 - 11**).¹⁰⁵ However, while the basic composition of the design carried by the medallion and the contorniate suggests a relationship between them, the contorniate-engraver would appear to have introduced modifications to the Antonine design, if indeed it served as his prototype. On the contorniate Hercules' right arm is shown in a slightly different pose, the tree to the left has been simplified, the base-line removed, and the body of the centaur enlarged so that his legs are shown braced against the sweep of the field. Artistically this contorniate-type is a satisfying example of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction. The figures themselves are generally well proportioned and muscled, and their poses, particularly that of the centaur with its heads flung back and arms raised, convincingly suggest the physical strain of the combat.

A contorniate-type showing Hercules combatting the Cerynaian stag (**Plate 22.2**)¹⁰⁶ bears compositional and iconographical parallels with designs carried on the reverse of coins minted at Rome

¹⁰⁴ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 19.3; see **Plate 21.1(a)**. For a line-drawing of the type see Sabatier 1860, Pl. XIII.8; see **Plate 21.1(b)**. This type is known only from a piece on which it is coupled with an obverse-type of Alexander the Great. See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm III.A.

¹⁰⁵ See Chapter Four.A, pp.79 - 80. See also Alföldi 1990, pp.142 - 143.

¹⁰⁶ Alföldi 1976, p.200, number 75a, Tafel 84.5. This type is identified by Alföldi 1976, Diagramm II as belonging to earlier period of 'Die Zweite Grosse Stempelfolge'.

by Maximian (Plate 15.15 and .25), and also known from provincial issues of that period (Plate 15.16 - 18).¹⁰⁷ While the figures of Hercules and the stag represented on the coin-types are generally poorly proportioned, those carried on the contorniate-type reflect finer workmanship. Although the contorniate is worn, both figures appear well proportioned and naturalistic. Hercules is shown with his back to the viewer, his right knee braced against the stag's back, his right arm extended to grasp its antler. Hercules' left leg is extended to the left, his left elbow bent, and the rest of his left arm obscured from view by his robust body. This pose is most similar to that of the coin-types, but the figures are here shown from a different point of view. Similarities between the coin-types and a sculptural representation (Figure XXVIII) of the scene have been noted.¹⁰⁸ While it is possible that the contorniate-type was directly inspired by some statuary prototype, features of the design suggest that it may have been drawn from a numismatic prototype. Hercules' head, shown in the upper portion of the flan, appears to be slightly cut off by a furrow which circles the edge of the field. Similarly the hero's left foot and the stag's hoof appear cut off. These points suggest that the engraver may have borrowed the design from a numismatic piece or actually used a die originally intended for a slightly larger flan.^{108a}

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter Six.B, pp.206f.

¹⁰⁸ See Chapter Six.B, Note 31.

^{108a} Alföldi 1990, pp.143 - 144 notes other possible prototypes.

Whether the original composition of some fine contorniate-engraver directly inspired by a sculptural prototype or borrowed from some now lost medallion, this 'Hercules and the Stag' type may be judged a good example of narrative art. The action depicted is specific and visually credible, the figures appear naturalistic, and their poses capture the physical strain of the event. Of particular visual interest is the manner in which the stag has been portrayed. Its large ears compositionally balance its head, while the long and elegant curve of its neck is continued in the lines of its body which is bent under the force of the hero's knee. Elements of landscape would also appear to have been added. Although worn, tree-like features appear to the left and right, giving the design a sense of spatial setting.

The legendary battle between Bellerophon and the Chimaera was depicted on the reverses of several contorniates. Two design-types can be distinguished, based on differences in their depiction of the hero's dress and weapon. On one design-type Bellerophon is shown covered in a tunic, with drapery flowing behind and his right arm raised, having just hurled a short spear at the Chimaera (Plate 22.3).¹⁰⁹ On the other he appears to be dressed in a military tunic, with a cloak attached at the back, and holding in his raised right arm a long javelin which is shown striking the monster in the back (Plate 22.4).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 13.2 - 3, 161.3 - 5 and 8.

¹¹⁰ Alföldi 1976, Tafel n12.9 - 12, 31.1.

The design-types show Bellerophon mounted on Pegasus. The flying horse is recognizable by its wings, and it is shown in an attitude of rearing towards the right. The Chimaera is shown in the lower portion of the field, leaping to the right. In both design-types she is shown mortally wounded, one depicts her with a short spear entering her body above the goat's head and exiting through her stomach, the other shows a long javelin held by the hero to have entered her back. In both cases the positioning of the figures within the field is in keeping with surviving accounts of the battle, such as that by Apollodorus:

ἀναβιβάσας οὖν ἑαυτὸν ὁ Βελλεροφόντης ἐπὶ τὸν
Πήγασον, ὃν εἶχεν ἵππον ἐκ Μεδούσης πτηνὸν
γεγεννημένον καὶ Ποσειδῶνος, ἄρβεις εἰς ὕψος
ἀπὸ τούτου κατετόξευσε τὴν Χίμαιραν....

The Library II.iii.2

Compositional similarities between the 'Bellerophon and Chimaera' design-types and contorniates depicting a horseman triumphing over a lion suggest that a 'Horseman and Lion' motif may have been used as an artistic prototype.¹¹¹ Adapting the

¹¹¹ For example see Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 7.4 - 12, 8.1 - 4, and Alföldi 1990, pp.133 -136 . That the 'Horseman and Lion' motif was employed on contorniates struck shortly before those depicting Bellerophon and the Chimaera adds weight to the suggestion that the latter were inspired by the former. See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm II.

'Horseman and Lion' motif by introducing compositional changes, such as the addition of wings to the horse, and goat and serpent heads to the body of the lion, the engravers of these design-types created a narrative scene illustrative of a specific mythological event. As examples of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction, the 'Bellerophon and Chimaera' design-types are somewhat lacking in visual interest.

Depictions of Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius fleeing Troy are known from two contorniate design-types, one bearing the reverse legend **AEN-EAS** (Plate 22.5),¹¹² the other without (Plate 22.6).¹¹³ The design is compositionally very similar to that displayed on the medallions and coins of Antoninus Pius' 'programme series' (Plate 10.2 - 5),¹¹⁴ copied and re-issued on a medallion of Constantine I as part of his **URBS ROMA** series (Plate 16.8).¹¹⁵ Similarly the non-narrative 'She-wolf and Twins' motif known, for example, from Constantine's **URBS ROMA**

¹¹² Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 142.9 - 12, 143.1 - 4. *LIMC* I, *Aineias* p.390, n.145. This type is identified by Alföldi 1976, Diagramm II as belonging to 'Die Zweite Grosse Stempelfolge'.

¹¹³ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 145.4. This type is known only from a piece on which it is coupled with an obverse type of Trajan, and is hence not placed within Alföldi's relative chronology. See Alföldi 1976, Diagramm III.A.

¹¹⁴ See Chapter Four.B.ii, pp.110f. For description of the type and comparisons with coin-types, see MacDonald 1909, pp.39 - 40. See also Alföldi 1990, pp.158f.

¹¹⁵ See Chapter Six.C, p.214.

series (Plate 16.1 - 7))¹¹⁶ was also reproduced on contorniates (Plate 22.7 - 8).¹¹⁷

Before concluding discussion of struck mythological narrative contorniate-types it should be noted that various designs of a non-narrative nature were also produced during both striking periods,¹¹⁸ as were types of questionable subject matter¹¹⁹ or

¹¹⁶ See Chapter Six.C, pp.210 - 213. Also see Alföldi 1990, p.160.

¹¹⁷ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 12.2; see Plate 22.7, and Cabinet des Médailles Number 17134; see Plate 22.8. Alföldi 1976, Diagramm II identifies the former type as belong to 'Die Zweite Grosse Stempelfolge'. The 'She-wolf and Twins' motif also form part of more complex contorniate-designs; one type also depicting Roma, another various allegorical figures. See Alföldi 1976, p.203, Tafel 195.1 and 109.4. The latter contorniate-type would appear to have been copied from a coin-type issued by Vespasian (BMCRE II, Plate 34.5).

¹¹⁸ Examples of such non-narrative contorniate-types include; 'Luna, Eros and Endymion' (Alföldi 1976, Tafel 49.9 and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 220.6-9; see Plate 22.9), 'Antiope or Hippolyta and Thesus' (Alföldi 1943, Tafel XXXVII.7; see Plate 22.10), and 'Hercules and Aurora' (Alföldi 1976, Tafel 121.12 and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 121.11-12; see Plate 22.11).

¹¹⁹ Illustrative of the problematical nature of some contorniate-types are four examples. The first is tentatively identified by Alföldi 1976, p.198, to show Mars advancing from the left towards the reclining figure of Rhea. Alföldi 1976, Tafel 112.9; see Plate 22.12. Compositionally the scene is somewhat similar to 'Mars and Rhea' coin- and medallion-types minted in the name of the divine Faustina (see Plate 11.6 - 8). While worn, the figures on this contorniate-type are most ill-proportioned and crudely executed. Also see Alföldi 1990, p.159. The second contorniate-type shows a figure, wearing a tunic, apparently gathering fruit with the aid of a pole, while a large serpent looks on from the right. Could the type be an adaption based on the legend of Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides? (Alföldi 1943, Tafel LXII.5, and Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 178.2 - 8, 179.1 - 8; see Plate 22.13). The type is known only from a piece on which it is coupled with an obverse-type of Pius-Caracalla. MacDonald 1909, p.50, notes; "No satisfactory explanation of the reverse type has yet been offered... But it is hardly possible to doubt that, as was long ago suggested, the scene depicted has some connection with the myth of the Hesperides." Alföldi 1976, p.142, identifies the type simply as, "Ungeklärte Szene". The third type, which depicts a warrior standing before an architectural structure, is described by Alföldi 1976, p.197, number 52, as "Szenen aus der klassischen Mythologie und aus dem literarischen Sagenschatz", and classified by Alföldi 1990, pp.131f., as 'Krieger vor Tempel'. (Alföldi 1976, Tafel 37.12, and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 218.3; see Plate 22.14). The suggestion that the
(Continued. ...

carrying scenes which present parallels with known external references, yet differing from surviving sources in points of detail.¹²⁰ To what extent such questionable types are the product of contorniate-engravers' variations on, or interpretations of, given mythological scenes is impossible to ascertain.

scene was meant to depict 'Die Sieben gegn Theben' (Alföldi 1990, p.131 and Tafel 254.1 - 4) appears improbable. The sculptural decorations of the temple, three human(?) heads is most unusual, and the suggestion that they many have been intended to represent defenders of the town unlikely. It is possible that the die-engraver borrowed compositional elements from prototypes such as those suggested by Alföldi. However the type may well represent a typical scene of a warrior and temple. The type is known only from a piece on which it is coupled with an obverse-type of Apuleius. The fourth type, which shows a male(?) figure seated on a rock, is identified by McDowall 1906, p.252, as representing Philoctetes (Alföldi 1976, Tafel 5.11; see Plate 22.15). She suggests that the figure of Philoctetes is represented in accordance with Sophocles' description (*Philoctetes* lines 227 - 228), "...seated alone on the desolate rocks of Lemnos, resting his wounded foot, and gazing about him in despair." It should be noted, however that Philoctetes' two most characteristic features (his bandaged foot and his bow), appear absent from the design. It may even be the case that the figure is female, and was intended to represent the grieving Penelope or Niobe. Even assuming that a mythological figure is represented, the type appears to be a symbol of grief and despair and is of limited narrative interest. Tocci 1965, p.196, simply describes the type as, "Figura virile sedente quasi a destra sopra una rupe...." Kapossy 1971/72, p.146 describes it as "Sitzende Macedonia".

¹²⁰ For example Alföldi 1943, Tafel LXVII.4, Alföldi 1976, Tafel 163.2 - 10, 164.1 - 6, and 148.10, and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 221.10; see Plate 22.16. MacDonald 1909, p.48, suggests that the object shown to the right of a figure of Vulcan "...may be the newly finished shield of Achilles.", and describes its reliefs as Sol and Luna, surrounded by Zodiac symbols. Alföldi 1976, p.195 and Alföldi 1990, p.118, calls the type "Der Schild des Achilles". However the shield's decorative features are clearly irreconcilable with the detailed description of the design given by Vergil in his *Aeneid* (Book VIII.630f.). This discrepancy may be due to ignorance on the part of the die-engraver, his desire to simplify the design, or to the fact that he did not intend his type to be illustrative of this specific event.

C) MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVE ART ON CAST CONTORNIATE-TYPES

Outside the scope of Alföldi's relative chronology,¹²¹ several cast contorniate-types carry mythological scenes. The artistic quality of such cast types is generally far below that of the struck types. Arguably the most successful such cast design shows Hercules and the Nemean lion (**Plate 23.1**).¹²² The hero is identified by his discarded bow and quiver which are shown to the right. The figure of Hercules stands to the right, grasping the rearing lion around the mane. Despite some modelling of the figure and an apparent interest in pose, the die-engraver's representation of Hercules is most unnaturalistic. He is too squat and disproportioned. For example the scale on which his head is depicted is out of proportion with that of the rest of his body, which is itself schematically represented. Lacking visual credence and failing to suggest the violent nature of the physical struggle it attempts to depict, the design may be judged 'poor' from the narrative point of view.

Two further cast contorniate-types show a human figure engaged in combat with a large lion (**Plate 23.2 - 3**).¹²³ Interpretation of

¹²¹ See above Note 9.

¹²² British Museum, Tray 20, corresponding to Alföldi 1943, Tafel LXI.7 and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 256.4.

¹²³ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 100.1; see **Plate 23.2**, and Tafel 99.7, and Alföldi 1990, Tafel 224.7; see **Plate 23.3**.

the types is open to debate.¹²⁴ Whatever the nature of the combat they depict, these contorniates are extremely poor examples of the die-engravers' art. In both cases the human figure and lion are schematically represented and totally unnaturalistic.

Hercules, identified by his club, is depicted on a further cast contorniate-type grasping a serpentine figure (Plate 23.4).¹²⁵ Identification of the specific heroic deed here depicted is problematical.¹²⁶ The serpentine nature of the animal, and its hold

¹²⁴ Do they illustrate Hercules' fight with the Nemean lion, as described by Alföldi 1976, pp.174 - 175, and Alföldi 1990, p.145, and constitute examples of the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction, or do they show typical scenes of a criminal condemnatio ad bestiam, or action from the venationes? The absence of Hercules' attribute, the club, and the nature of the combat suggests the latter, but the figures are shown in heroic nudity, lacking the traditional dress of the bestiarii.

¹²⁵ Alföldi 1976, Tafeln 22.6 and 166.1. The figure of Hercules, resting on his club, is known from a non-narrative cast contorniate-type (Alföldi 1976, Tafel 100.3; see Plate 23.5). This design would appear to represent a statue-type, possibly a 'Farnese Hercules' type; see Figure XI. See Alföldi 1990, pp.148f. A numismatic piece reproduced by Alföldi 1976, Tafel 208.6, and identified as "Kopf des Hercules auf Vs." (Alföldi 1990, pp.150 - 151) was examined on my initiative in 1988 at the British Museum (Contorniate Cabinet), and found to be a forgery.

¹²⁶ The problematical nature of the subject matter of this 'Hercules and the Hydra?' type is even more extreme on other cast contorniate-types. For example, a piece showing a quadriga whose driver appears to be supporting an object on his right arm, is discussed by MacDonald 1909, p.49: "It is just possible that the reverse may be intended for Pluto carrying off Proserpina." Details are most difficult to observe as it is worn. Nevertheless the artistic merits of the design appear very limited. The horses of the quadriga are schematically represented, and the driving figure is poorly proportioned and crudely executed. See MacDonald 1909, Plate IV.2; see Plate 23.6. Furthermore MacDonald 1909, pp. 31 - 32, describes a contorniate-type as "Naked (?female) figure seated r., with knees drawn up and r. hand resting on hip; l. hand grasps long staff or pole which lies on knees and project forward across the whole field; in the back-ground, traces of a building (?or of a vessel with rowers) ...", and notes, "The blinding of Polyphemus seemed at one time to promise a possible explanation... But the suggestion proved difficult to work out in detail." See MacDonald 1909, Plate II.6, and Alföldi 1976, Tafel 100.9; see Plate 23.7. Alföldi 1976, p.176, describes this type as, "Fechter (?) auf dem Boden sitzend." Furthermore Alföldi 1990, p.146, classifies two contorniate-types (Alföldi 1976, Tafel 100.7 - 8; see Plate 23.8 - 9) as "Hercules (Continued. ...

around the hero's leg, suggest that it may have been intended to represent the Hydra. However this creature's most characteristic feature, its multitude of heads, is missing from the design.¹²⁷ Whatever the specific nature of the heroic event being depicted, from the artistic point of view this type is crude and poorly executed. The figure of Hercules is ill-proportioned. His hips are not depicted - his right leg appear to be joined directly to his abdomen. Muscling is restricted to his chest, and while his head, arms and left leg are shown from a side view, his right leg and trunk are shown from the front in an unnaturalistic combination of perspectives. Hercules' extended right arm holds his club which is angled sharply towards his body in order to fit within the curve of the field. Given the club's position, and the poses of the figures, it is impossible for the viewer to believe that the weapon could actually be employed to smite the foe. The unnaturalistic and stiff pose of the poorly proportioned figure results in visual incredibility and the design fails to suggest adequately the physical action implied by this curious heroic deed.

und der nemeische Löwe". The pieces in question appear so worn that other than depicting a human figure in combat with an animal, the subject matter of the designs is unclear.

¹²⁷ Alföldi 1976, p.179, and Alföldi 1990 pp.147 - 148, identifies the type as Hercules combatting the Hydra. Could it be that the die-engraver of this design has simplified the Hydra, representing it as a single-headed creature? Could it be meant to represent Hercules dispatching the Hydra's middle, immortal head (although his club would be an inappropriate weapon)? A curious curved feature on the rightside of the contorniate-flan may represent one of the Hydra's heads, however it does not appear to be attached to the main body of the creature. Has the engraver here depicted Hercules fighting Periclymenus in the form of a serpent, or has he depicted some heroic deed now lost to the written accounts?

The battle between Apollo and Python is known from three surviving cast contorniate-types. That which exhibits the greatest artistic merit, bearing the reverse legend PHIT[IO]S, shows figures to the left and right, partially obscured from view by large boulders (Plate 23.10).¹²⁸ To the lower right lies the doubly looped body of a large serpent. The figure of Apollo, shown to the right and wearing a flowing cape, is in the act of reaching for an arrow. His bow, held forth in his left hand, is clearly displayed. The figure to the left looks on, perhaps representing Diana.¹²⁹ A degree of dramatic tension is created in the design by the actions of the figures. Diana's(?) left arm, shown holding a weapon,¹³⁰ is extended towards the creature and directs attention to it. The monster, in turn, appears to raising itself up as if to strike her. The figure of the god Apollo, his bow extended and reaching for his arrows, his cape flying behind him, clearly indicates the next phase of the action.

¹²⁸ Alföldi 1976, p.176 and Tafel 16.7 - 8. The subject of Apollo and Python was celebrated on a coin of Trajan Decius minted in Pamphylien (LIMC II, Apollon p.303, n.100.c; see **Figure XXXII.v**). Similarities between this coin-type and the various contorniates showing this conflict (such as the depiction of coiled serpent, rocks and Apollo's action) suggest possibility that these numismatic pieces may have been derived from a common prototype.

¹²⁹ While the presence of Diana at the scene of the battle between Apollo and Python is not reported by any of the surviving sources, such as Ovid, Metamorphoses I.437f., her close association with her brother Apollo would suggest that the figure was intended to represent her. Sabatier 1860, p.145, suggested that the scene shown on the contorniate-type here reproduced as **Plate 23.11** may show "Apollon, Diane et le serpent Python?"

¹³⁰ On the piece held in the British Museum, Number R4804 (here reproduced as **Plate 23.10**), this figure would appear to hold an object, but whether it be a staff, club or bow is impossible to say due to wear in this area of the field.

Thus the design creates an atmosphere of threatening attack, creating a visually stimulating composition of action and re-action which engages the viewer.

In points of general composition the second 'Apollo and Python' type is similar (Plate 23.11).¹³¹ It too shows two figures looking down towards a large serpent. However this example appears much more schematic. The boulders, for example, are represented by patterned, curved lines. An incised tree, added to the upper centre of the field, is similarly poorly executed. The active serpent of the previously discussed type, which has its head raised and body coiled to support it, is here replaced by a docile creature apparently at rest (or dead?). Similarly the poses of the figures of this type, represented by simple geometrical shapes, appear static and stiff. That to the left is shown to be holding a bow in the left hand with the right resting on a rock, looking to the right. The figure of Apollo is similarly depicted with one arm at ease, his bow shown, but at rest. This design's lack of physical action and its schematic, unnaturalistic representation of the figures and their spatial setting render it an extremely poor example of narrative art.

The third 'Apollo and Python' type, cast in conjunction with an obverse depicting a portrait of Alexander the Great (Plate

¹³¹ Alföldi 1976, Tafel 16.10 - 13. Alföldi (p.167), identifies the type as "Pythonschlange". Details of the type here discussed are based on observation of a piece held at the Cabinet des Médailles, Number 17157.

23.12),¹³² presents a curious illustration of the event, and shares no compositional features with the types discussed above. Features of the design such as the scale on which the serpent is shown, the unusual appearance of its head, and the employment of a bow by its attacker identify the scene as Delphian Apollo's battle with Python. The design is full of detail and points of visual interest. The monster Python is shown to the left. Its bird-like head, rising from a huge body of serpentine coils, is facing to the right and crowned by a comb-like feature.¹³³ In the extreme upper portion of the contorniate-field an incised plant, resembling a palm, is shown. Delphian Apollo is depicted to the right, aiming his bow at Python. Interestingly Apollo's legs are obscured from view by a large and irregular boulder, outlined with a row of engraved dots, which rises to cover much of the flan. Textural contrasts are most evident. For example Apollo's hair contrasts with the scales of Python, while the leafy branches of the plant contrast with the surface of the engraved boulder. Despite such features which engage the attention of the viewer, the scene is lacking in visual credence.

This contorniate-type shows Delphian Apollo standing with his back to the viewer. His buttocks and spine are clearly visible. His head is turned sharply to the left, his right arm holding the bow and

¹³² Alföldi 1976, Tafel 21.9. Alföldi (p.168), identifies the type as "Apollo, die Python-schlange tötend."

¹³³ This feature on the serpent's head is most similar to that depicted on designs showing a large, coiled serpent looking towards a vessel containing fire. See Alföldi 1976, Tafel 100.10 - 11.

his left arm drawing back the string. The left arm, however, obscures his shoulders, suggesting he is firing the arrow from behind his back. Such a pose would appear to be a most unlikely one, and the positioning of the left arm is such that, even if this design was intended to show the dexterity of the god, it is unnaturalistic. The strange pose in which Apollo is portrayed and his close proximity to the serpent makes the scene appear somewhat comical rather than a dramatic illustration of Apollo's battle with Python.

SUMMARY

While the termination of mythological narrative designs on the official coins and medallions minted at Rome can be dated to the reign of Constantius II, the manufacturing of contorniates appears to have begun at about this time.¹³⁴ The contorniates were to carry such celebrations of mythological traditions until the later part of the fifth century. Whereas officially struck numismatic mythological types of the Post-Antonine period tended to centre on figures or events directly concerned with the legendary past of Rome, the contorniates witness a strong revival of Greek mythological subjects. Furthermore types such as 'Hercules and Nessus' (Plates 17.6, 21.9 - 10 and 22.1(a) - (b)), 'Hercules and the Stag' (Plate

¹³⁴ See above Note 2.

22.2), 'Ulysses and Scylla' (Plate 20.1 - 6(b)), the 'Punishment of Dirce' (Plate 19.5 - 9(b)), 'Laocoon' (Plate 18.10 - 12), 'Jason and the Brazen Bulls' (Plate 21.7 - 8), and various heroic figures engaged in combat (Plates 17.5, and 21.1, 3 - 6 and 11), carry designs depicting violent physical events. Such scenes of conflict and physical action and re-action were rarely celebrated on the officially minted coins and medallions issued from the City of Rome.¹³⁵

The reasons for the revival of Greek mythological traditions under the Christian Empire on the contorniates are uncertain. While the specific purpose for which contorniates were made is open to debate,¹³⁶ Toynbee suggests that "... they may have been mementoes distributed to the people at the beginning of every show, designed as reminiscences of one or other of the day's outstanding performances, or containing references to ceremonies, scenery, and decorations associated with the spectacles, or offering to backers and supporters good omens of success for favourite performers."¹³⁷ Her argument that mythological contorniate-types were allusions to dramatic performances of legendary events provides some insight into the possible motivation behind the choice of mythological subject matter.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ See Chapters Four.A, Five.B and Six.B, and Plates 7.10 - 13, 12.5, 12.10, 14.1 - 2 and 15.8 - 11, .14 - 15, .21 and .25.

¹³⁶ See above Note 7.

¹³⁷ Toynbee 1945, p.120.

¹³⁸ Toynbee 1945, p.120, suggests that some divine figures depicted on the contorniates "... may very well be extracts from mythological dramatic scenes or
(Continued. ...

That contorniate-types are known to have been copied from officially minted coin- and medallion-types suggest that the contorniate-engravers "...borrowed what they could, adapting existing designs, and in particular earlier coin types, of kindred content for their own purposes."¹³⁹ Contorniates bearing scenes of 'Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius' (Plate 22.5 - 6), 'The She-wolf and Twins' (Plate 22.7 - 8), 'Hercules and Nessus' (Plate 22.1(a) - (b)) and the SABINAE design-types (Plate 17.1 - 4), all copied from officially minted medallion-types, suggest that the contorniate-engravers may have had access to 'proofs' or dies held in an archive of the Roman mint. The existence of various contorniates where minor compositional disparities between design-types of the same basic composition, such as on those examples bearing scenes of 'Ulysses and Scylla' (Plate 20.1 - 6(b)), 'Achilles and Penthesilea' (Plate 18.1(a) - 6), and 'Jason and the Brazen Bulls' (Plate 21.7 - 8), suggests that contorniate-engravers copied each other in a protracted and corrupting process whereby iconographical and

tableaux, mimes or pyrrhica, enacted in theatre or amphitheatre, in which these deities appeared. Some may have been reminiscent of the statues which stood on the wall running down the centre of the race-course. The ludi were, after all, in essence religious celebrations, traditionally linked with the cult of the ancient gods. Other mythological scenes - Hero and Leander, Circe and Odysseus, Laocoon, Jason, Dirce, Odysseus' escape beneath the belly of the ram, Scylla, Bellerophon, etc. - can be explained as allusions to actual shows. Martial (De spect. 25) records a nocturnal performance of the Hero and Leander scene: this, and an enactment of the Scylla episode, may have taken place when the arena was flooded for a naumachy."

¹³⁹ Toynbee 1945, p.120. MacDonald 1909, p.27, discussing the obverse-types of Apollonius of Tyana, Horace and Sallust, suggests a similar view: "The workman who were responsible for the contorniates lacked the originality to invent such likenesses; they must have copied them, probably from gems"

anatomical changes were introduced due to misinterpretations and poor workmanship. The narrative qualities of designs resulting from such a copying process vary greatly. While in the case of the corrupted 'Achilles and Penthesilea' design-types (Plate 18.2 - 4) errors in composition have rendered them non-narrative, generic scenes, it might be argued that the corrupted 'Ulysses and Scylla' design-types (Plate 20.2 - 6(b)) are, to a degree, enhanced by the additional violent action of the introduced 'sea-creatures'.

The artistic merits and narrative qualities of the mythological contorniate-types differ greatly between types, and design-types. A comparison of the 'Hercules and Hydra?' type (Plate 23.4) and a 'Jason and the Brazen Bulls' design-type (Plate 21.7) reveals artistic features so opposed as to suggest they belong to entirely different traditions of numismatic art. It is difficult to conceive that such discrepancies were due simply to the commissioners of the contorniates employing artists of varying artistic talent. The artistic features of coin- and medallion-types issued contemporaneously with the contorniates bear no relationship with those exhibited on the finest contorniates. It would seem incongruous that the commissioners of contorniates would have access to die-artists of such talent when the works of the official mint suggest a complete absence of master-engravers of the artistic skill and tradition evident on the finer contorniates. The fact that the tradition of engraving larger dies disappears soon after the reign of Theodosius I, when

the official issuing of medallions all but ceases,¹⁴⁰ suggests that skills and techniques of working dies outside the scale of the everyday coinage would have degenerated during the fifth century. These factors suggest that many of the finest contorniate-types are likely to have been borrowed from numismatic or other prototypes.

The workshops of the contorniate-engravers, if not always schools of great artistic endeavour or innovation, were nonetheless places in which complex processes of copying and re-copying, of adaptation and misinterpretation occurred. While it is likely that the narrative qualities of the finest contorniate-types reflect the art of earlier engravers whose designs served as prototypes, nevertheless it was the contorniates which were to be the medium for the final expression of mythological numismatic narrative in the Roman Imperial period. As such they were the last flans to present the Roman people with the rich narrative tradition which had flowered centuries before during the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.

¹⁴⁰ Toynbee 1944, p.254.

CONCLUSION

THE NATURE OF ROMAN MYTHOLOGICAL NUMISMATIC NARRATIVE ART

A) AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

B) ART AND ENGRAVING SCHOOLS : THE EVIDENCE OF MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVE DEPICTIONS

C) NARRATIVE MODES EMPLOYED ON ROMAN MYTHOLOGICAL NUMISMATIC TYPES

A) AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Mythological figures were celebrated on the coinage of Rome from the Republic to the Late Empire. In many cases such figures were depicted engaged in typical, non-narrative scenes. Types such as the 'She-wolf and Twins' (Plates 1.2, 3.5 - 6, 4.2 - 5, 6.3 - 6, 12.11, 14.7 - 8, 15.1, and 16.1 - 7) and 'Hercules Crowned by Victory' (Plates 12.7 and 13.1) were fundamentally symbolic in purpose, proclaiming Rome's divine protectors and the victories won with their aid. With the employment of the coin-flan by Gaius Renius to proclaim the glory of his gens, a precedent had been set for the use of coinage for political 'publicity'.¹ It was a precedent soon to be followed by Republican moneyers, such as Lucius Titurius Sabinus,² who, claiming descent from mythological and legendary figures, caused such ancestors to be depicted on their coinage. It was from such political motives that the first mythological narrative types were created on the Roman coinage. Many of the ancestors claimed by the moneyers lacked specific accoutrements which would allow the viewer to identify the individual shown and hence understand the meaning of the design. Significantly the moneyers chose not simply to use explanatory legends to identify such individuals, but rather depicted the figure engaged in a specific

¹ Levick 1982, p.105, quoting Buttrely NC 12 (1972) pp.89f. Also see Chapter One, p.6, Note16.

² See Chapter One, pp.9, Note 26.

action, such as Faustulus discovering Romulus and Remus (**Plate 1.5**).³ Thus Roman mythological numismatic narrative art grew out of the personal political desires of moneyers, independent of the Greek tradition of narrative representations exemplified by trientes depicting the exploits of Hercules (**Plate 1.3 - 4**). The Republican examples of mythological numismatic narrative art are generally lacking in artistic merit. The figures themselves appear schematic and the narrative qualities of the types are often poor. These factors strongly suggest that on such types the desire to create visually credible and stimulating narrative scenes was subordinate to the need to produce simple scenes of action which could be easily identified, and thus the political message of the type interpreted. They may also reflect a generally poor standard of artistic workmanship among the die-engravers of the Republican period.

With the establishment of the Principate individual moneyers and their private concerns were completely eclipsed by the figure of the emperor. After 18 B.C. the mythological narrative types disappear from the Julio-Claudian coinage minted at Rome, despite the fact the Augustus' claim of descent from Iulus would appear to have been a subject well suited to numismatic celebration.⁴ Mythological types of the period from Augustus to Hadrian are largely restricted to Trajan's 'restoration' of Republican coin-types (**Plate 3.7 - 13**).

³ See Chapter One, p.7, Notes 20 - 20.a.

⁴ See Chapter Two, pp.26 - 27, Note 8.

The reign of Hadrian witnessed what might be termed a 'revolution' in Roman mythological numismatic narrative art. While some of his coin-types depicted scenes of typical mythological action, for example showing Jupiter and Amalthea and the she-wolf and twins (**Plate 4.1 - 5**), Hadrianic medallions reflect the sudden introduction of a fully developed narrative tradition. The first series proper of bronze medallions was issued under Hadrian. The very nature of medallions - having larger flans than the everyday coinage and probably being created for personal distribution - explains in part the reason why it was the medallion-flans which were to carry the most complex and artistically successful Roman mythological narrative types. Medallion production "... is subject to special constraints and the artistic standards employed may in consequence be centralized or conservative, hieratic, cultic or aristocratic. Medallions cannot, by definition, be quoted as indicators of the contemporary artistic milieu. They may be looked upon as examples of what could be achieved at the time...."⁵

Hadrian's philhellenic interests, evidence for the existence of the so-called 'Alpheios engraver', and the Greek subject matter of several Hadrianic medallions suggest that a medallion school of Greek die-artists or Romans working within Greek traditions was introduced to the Imperial Mint of Rome.

⁵ See Reece in Henig 1983, p.166.

The mythological medallion-types issued by Antoninus Pius, particularly those of the period of his third consulship, reflect very strong links with the artistic traditions established by Hadrian. Hadrianic types were copied, or re-issued with compositional modifications. Antoninus Pius may also have struck some posthumous medallions in the name of Hadrian.⁶ Official interest in Greek mythological subjects, as reflected by the introduction of new types, greatly increased during the reign of Antoninus Pius. The most significant series of mythological narrative types, the so-called 'programme series', was also issued during this period, perhaps inspired by the re-issuing of the 'Aeneid' medallion-type in A.D. 139, with an obverse-type of Antoninus Pius (**Plate 10.1**). Some simple types of 'programme series' medallions, (the 'Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius' and 'Mars and Rhea' types (**Plates 10.2 - 5, and 11.7 - 9**)), were also carried on the everyday coinage, the first types in the Imperial period which may be considered to constitute innovative examples of mythological narrative art represented on the everyday coinage. The various medallion-types classified as belonging to the 'programme series' share a common theme - they depict scenes of specific actions related to the city of Rome and its foundation. Artistically many of the types of this series number among the most successful, from the narrative point of view, to have ever been issued from Rome. While arguments that such types were

⁶ See Pond Rothman 1978, Kaiser-Reiss 1981, and Hill 1970, pp.78 - 79. Also see Appendix One, Some Posthumous Hadrianic Medallions.

created to fulfil a political purpose gives some insight into the possible motivation behind the issuing of such a series,⁷ the designs themselves reflect the die-artists' desire to illustrate, in a naturalistic and visually credible manner, scenes of action which would engage the attention of their admirers and cause them to reflect on the story, of which the type illustrates a specific moment.

Numerically and artistically the reign of Antoninus Pius represents the highpoint of Roman mythological numismatic narrative art. Marcus Aurelius' medallion-engravers copied some of Antoninus Pius' non-narrative mythological types and altered Antoninus Pius' 'Jupiter and a Giant' type (**Plate 7.13**) so as to show a generic scene of Jupiter overcoming a German warrior (**Plate 12.10**), but his reign is devoid of narrative types. This sudden change in artistic direction is unlikely to have been the result of a major change in the artistic personnel at the mint. Rather it would seem to reflect the changing interests of the emperor who, facing a new military climate, chose to focus attention on his own person. Commodus' association with Hercules is well attested by his coins and medallions; however only one narrative design of his reign was minted at Rome (**Plate 13.4 - 9**). Mythological narrative numismatic designs were similarly rare during the Severan dynasty, with such types being copied from Antoninus Pius' medallions (**Plate 14.1 - 2 and 14.4 - 5**). The trend of Imperial engravers to

⁷ Toynbee 1942, p.43. See Chapter Four.B, pp.101 - 110.

borrow earlier types, evident on the coins and medallions of this period, was to increase during the period of the Late Empire. While the products of great technical skill, the Severan die-engravers' re-issuing of the Antonine 'Hercules and the Potitii and Pinarii' medallion-type (**Plates 11.11 and 12.1(a) - (b)**) on coins (**Plate 14.4 - 5**) reflect the unsuitability of coin-flans to carry complex mythological designs, and the increasingly retrospective nature of die-artists' search for inspiration.

With the exception of the traditional 'She-wolf and Twins' motif issued under Philip I (**Plate 14.7 - 8**), mythological subjects disappear from coin- and medallion-flans from the Severan period to the reign of Gallienus when they are dramatically revived. However, while numerous mythological figures were celebrated on Gallienic issues, no examples from this period can be considered to constitute narrative art. Maximian's association with Hercules appears to have been the motivation for a series of Herculean coin-types issued during his reign (**Plate 15.8 - 12, .14 - 15, .21, and .25**). The varied quality of their narrative art and the fact that some such types appear to be copies of types issued by Postumus at the Mint of Cologne⁸ reflects the general degeneracy of artistic talent at the Mint of Rome during this troubled period. The last officially issued mythological narrative types date to the reigns of Constantine I and

⁸ See Chapter Six.B, pp.201f., and Appendix Three, The 'Labours of Hercules Series' Issued by Postumus at the Mint of Cologne.

Constantius II (**Plate 16.2 - 4, and 16.8 - 11**).⁹ These medallions appear, in most cases, as copies of Antonine originals (**Plates 10.2 - 5 and 11.9**).

During a period in the fourth and fifth centuries (c.A.D. 337 - 472) the numismatic celebration of mythological narrative scenes was continued on the contorniates. The number of different mythological types carried by their reverses, especially those related to Greek traditions, would seem to reflect a strong interest in such subjects among the peoples of Christian Rome. The artistic merits and narrative qualities of mythological contorniate-types vary greatly, suggesting that the finest were based on numismatic prototypes and that they were not the independent artistic creations of the contorniate-engravers themselves. Indeed many such types appear to copy officially minted coin- and medallion-types. Furthermore the mythological contorniate-types suggest the existence of a complex copying process.

⁹ See Chapter Six.C - D, pp.209 - 218.

B) ART AND ENGRAVING SCHOOLS - THE EVIDENCE OF MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVE DEPICTIONS

The artistic merits in general, and narrative qualities in particular, of Roman mythological numismatic types appear to follow a distinctive pattern. The generally poor artistry which characterized many Republican mythological types continued until the reign of Hadrian. The skills of master die-engravers, evident on Julio-Claudian coins such as Nero's architectural types,¹⁰ were not applied to creating mythological scenes.

The sudden appearance of a fully developed narrative tradition of high artistic merit on the medallions of Hadrian suggests that they were the products of his personal directive and the works of specially imported or commissioned die-artists.¹¹ The continuation and development of Hadrianic artistic ideals under Antoninus Pius strongly suggest that a die-engravers' school created by the former emperor continued to produce during the latter's reign. In the period after Antoninus Pius up until the end of the Severan Dynasty medallic art and technical skill appear to suffer little decline, yet mythological narrative types all but disappear except for the occasional re-issuing of a type.¹² These factors suggest an imposed

¹⁰ For example see BMCRE I, Plate 43.3, and Fuchs 1969, Numbers 12.131 - 132 and .134, and 13.136.

¹¹ See Chapter Three.A, p.35, Note 5, pp.42f., and Chapter Four, p.175, Note 243.

¹² See Plate 14.1 - 2, and 14.4 - 5

change in direction regarding the subject matter celebrated on the medallions in response to an increase in emphasis on military concerns.

The general decline of Roman numismatic art during the third, fourth and fifth centuries is perhaps most evident on the coins and medallions which depicted mythological types. Increasingly the figures shown on such types appear schematically represented and artistic interests, reflected by such features as the inclusion of landscape elements and the desire to create an illusion of spatial depth within designs, decline. The finest works created in Rome(?)¹³ during the third century, the niketeria produced for distribution at the Greek Games, had little or no artistic impact on the everyday coinage or medallions minted in the city of Rome.¹⁴

In view of the general trend of artistic degeneracy witnessed by the officially struck coins and medallions bearing mythological types, the exceptional narrative qualities evident on the finest contorniates cannot be explained as the direct product of an artistic originality. Rather their artistic features strongly suggest that they are the results of copying from numismatic prototypes, such as medallion-types. The evidence of several surviving contorniate design-types, and types

¹³ See Appendix Five, The Niketeria.

¹⁴ For a possible exception, see Chapter Six.A, p.200, Note 19, and **Plate 15.6 - 7**.

of conflicting artistic qualities, appear to be the products of a protracted and corrupting process of copying and re-copying on the part of contorniate-engravers whereby the works of their peers were at times used as prototypes. The alterations made to some such types suggests that the contorniate die-artists borrowed and adapted designs to suit their own individual needs and talents.

C) NARRATIVE MODES EMPLOYED ON ROMAN MYTHOLOGICAL NUMISMATIC TYPES

The overwhelming majority of mythological narrative types issued or made at Rome may be classified as belonging to the monoscenic mode of narrative art. Given the restricted medium of the flan it is not surprising that die-makers who depicted specific mythological events generally chose to focus upon a single action and did not transgress the principles of temporal and spatial unity. In depicting such an action the artist must have assumed that the audience of his creation would bring with them to his work knowledge of the myth or legend illustrated. By visual clues within the design, such as heroic accoutrements or the poses of the figures, the viewer is able to recognize the specific action shown and is encouraged to reflect on its relationship with other episodes of the same story. To criticize the monoscenic mode of narrative depiction

because it is "... narrative only for a spectator who recognizes the scene..."¹⁵ is to fail to consider that the artists employing it were creating for a contemporary audience which could reasonably be expected to have such knowledge external to the actual visual information conveyed by the design. This mode has been dismissed as not constituting true narrative on the grounds that the method involves the depiction of a single event, and that in order to 'tell a story' a sequence of events or episodes must be narrated.¹⁶ However, whereas other narrative modes may visually 'tell a story' by illustrating a series of events, the monoscenic mode relies on a different but arguably no less valid method of sequencing which is achieved by a combination of visual stimuli and mental reflection on the part of the viewer concerning the events preceding and following the action actually depicted.

While many mythological contorniate-types depict scenes of violent physical action,¹⁷ such subjects were not often depicted on the coin- and medallion-flans. With the exceptions of the 'Hercules and Nessus' (**Plate 7.10 - 11**), 'Hercules and Antaeus' (**Plate 7.12**), 'Aeneas and Turnus(?)' (**Plate 12.5**) and 'Jupiter and the Giants' medallion- and coin-types (**Plate 7.13 and 14.1 - 2**) and the 'Labours of Hercules' coin-types of Maximian (**Plate 15.8 -**

¹⁵ See Introduction, pp.iif.

¹⁶ See Introduction, pp.iif.

¹⁷ See Chapter Seven, p.280.

12, .14 - 15, .21, and .25), scenes of violent physical action are unknown from the official mythological types. This factor suggests that the choice of official types issued in Rome was not based on a simple criterion of visual interest. The **SABINAE** and 'Claudia Quinta' types struck posthumously for Faustina the Elder (**Plate 11.5** and **11.9 - 10**), and the Antonine **NAVIUS** (**Plate 10.8 - 9**) and **COCLES** (**Plate 11.1**) types suggest that many mythological narrative types had a significance beyond that of being purely illustrations of specific events.¹⁸ By celebrating heroic deeds and actions of piety, the types noted above served the dual purpose of engaging the viewer with visually stimulating scenes, while at the same time presenting him with actions themselves symbolic of religious, military or civil ideals.

The balance between symbolic and artistic purposes achieved on many of Antoninus Pius' medallions was largely restricted to his reign. On Republican and Early Imperial coin-types the symbolic significance of mythological scenes generally overshadows artistic considerations. In complete contrast to this tradition the Hadrianic 'Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides' (**Plate 5.1**) and 'Minerva and Neptune Contesting the Domination of Attica' (**Plate 5.2 - 4**) medallion-types appear to have had little symbolic significance for Roman recipients of such pieces. They would seem to have been produced purely as decorative designs illustrating specific

¹⁸ See Chapter Four.B.ii - iii, pp.127 - 130, 134 - 147.

mythological events. It is likely that the rulers after Antoninus Pius, facing a rising tide of military conflict from both foreign aggressors and within their own armies, deliberately dispensed with subtle references to Rome's legendary military glories and heroic or pious personages, and chose instead to focus attention on their own personal victories and acts of piety by issuing types with scenes of Imperial triumphs,¹⁹ Vota Publica,²⁰ symbols such as military standards,²¹ or allegorical types showing Victory²² and Roma.²³ Mythological figures who do appear on the coin- and medallion-flans of this period are celebrated because of their clear symbolic relationships with Imperial policy or personages; Jupiter and Amalthea symbolize the hoped for rise of Valerian II and Imperial beneficence of Gallienus,²⁴ the heroic virtues of Hercules are claimed by inference by emperors such as Commodus, Caracalla and Maximian.

Only two examples of Roman mythological numismatic narrative art have been identified which deviate from the monoscenic mode;

¹⁹ For example see Gneecchi 1912, Tavv.60.7, 73.2, 83.10, 84.1 - 2, and 85.2 - 3.

²⁰ For example see Gneecchi 1912, Tavv.61.3, 76.10, and 89.2 - 5.

²¹ For example see Gneecchi 1912, Tavv.60.9, 72.4, 72.10.

²² For example see Gneecchi 1912, Tavv.60.4 and 88.4.

²³ For example see Gneecchi 1912, Tavv.73.1, 82.10, and 83.9.

²⁴ Babelon 1900, pp.179 - 206. Also see Toynbee 1942, p.47, Toynbee 1944, p.163, and BMCRE IV, p.xcv. See Chapter Six.A, pp.197f.

the 'Aeneid' medallion-type (Plates 6.1 and 10.1), and the Antonine 'Aeneas and Ascanius in Latium' (Plate 10.6(a) - (b)) medallion-type. Interestingly the continuous mode of narrative art, that claimed by Wickhoff to be a "... kind of representation which was a specifically Roman product,"²⁵ is unknown from Roman numismatic production, perhaps because the repetition of individual figures within a single frame required by this mode of narrative was unsuited to the numismatic media. Similarly the cyclic mode of narrative art, as defined by Weitzmann,²⁶ was not employed on the coin-, medallion-, or contorniate-flans of Rome. Minted 'series', such as those produced at Rome, Alexandria²⁷ and Cologne²⁸ suggest, however, that numismatic groups may have been conceived in the tradition of cyclic narration.²⁹ Given the limitations of the flan to carry the complex arrangements required by cyclic narration, individual scenes of the 'cycle' executed on separate flans may, in isolation, be judged examples of the monoscenic mode of narrative expression. Such a 'cyclic mentality' in the planning of mythological numismatic types on the part of the mint officials or die-artists may

²⁵ Wickhoff 1900, p.114.

²⁶ Weitzmann 1970, pp.17 - 33. Also see Chapter Four.B.vii, p.170.

²⁷ See Appendix Four, Cyclic Narrative and Numismatic Art.

²⁸ See Appendix Three, The 'Labours of Hercules Series' Issued by Postumus at the Mint of Cologne.

²⁹ See Appendix Four, Cyclic Narrative and Numismatic Art.

be seen reflected, for example, in various medallion-types of the 'programme series' of Antoninus Pius.³⁰

The survival of a relief sculpture (**Figure XIX**) comparable to the 'Aeneas and Ascanius in Latium' medallion-type (**Plate 10.6(a) - (b)**) suggests that both were based on some common prototype,³¹ the composition being successfully adapted to the limited size and circular shape of the medallion-flan by the die-engraver. The 'Aeneas and Ascanius in Latium' medallion-type is a fine example of the simultaneous mode of narrative depiction. It depicts Aeneas engaged in two temporally separated actions - his landing in Latium and the discovery of the Great Sow. Furthermore the depiction of architectural features rising in the upper left of the flan appears to allude to a later event, the founding of Lavinium or Alba Longa. Thus, within the limits of a single frame, several phases of a specific legendary event have been portrayed.

The composition of the 'Aeneid' medallion-type (**Plates 6.1 and 10.1**), particularly its use of registers and curving walls which follow the sweep of the field, suggests that this design was specifically created for the medallion-flan.³² By assuming temporal and spatial unity within the registers, and by reading them from top

³⁰ See Chapter Four.B.vii, pp.170f.

³¹ See Chapter Four.B.ii, pp.121f.

³² See Chapters Three.B, pp.50 - 66 and Four.B.i, pp.108 - 110. Also see Appendix Two, The 'Aeneid' Medallion - a Narrative Interpretation.

to bottom, the viewer is presented with three scenes illustrative of episodes from the Aeneid. As only one action is actually portrayed, Aeneas bearing off Anchises to the Temple of Ceres, the design cannot be categorized as belonging to the cyclic mode of narrative as it is commonly defined.³³ Nevertheless, by showing the Great Sow and the walls of Lavinium or Alba Longa and thus alluding to specific actions by Aeneas (and Ascanius ?), the design when viewed as a whole is not limited to a single spatial or temporal setting. The narrative method employed by the die-maker might thus be called 'proto-cyclic'. By alluding to three events which were to lead to the foundation of the city of Rome the die-engraver has provided visual clues but relies on the viewer's knowledge of Vergil's text to interpret and link the events, and thus mentally recall the epic's broad sweep.

In terms of its narrative mode the 'Aeneid' medallion-type is a unique numismatic composition. Yet its engraver's reliance on the viewer bringing with him to the work sufficient external knowledge to allow him to interpret a scene and place it within the context of events preceding or following that illustrated, and thereby come to an understanding of its full significance, is common to all modes of narrative depiction. Narrative, perhaps more than any other form of artistic expression, **is in the eye and mind of the beholder.**

³³ See Weitzmann 1970, pp.17f.